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SECURITY DEPENDS ON SEA-POWER

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ONE effect of recent events in the Mediterranean has been the opening of long-closed eyes to the insecurity of British interests in that Sea. Anxiety about the Mediterranean, never seriously felt before (though misgivings have occasionally arisen), is now alive. The question is asked whether Great Britain today could use the Mediterranean route to the East in another war. It is suggested that if we should be confronted in war with one of the Mediterranean Powers we should be obliged to abandon that highway of our communications, military and commercial, and send our shipping to the East round the Cape of Good Hope ; and it appears also to be imagined that by thus evading difficulties we can find security.

The question does not end there. It needs to be realized that the Mediterranean is not only a route to the East. It has also an integral importance in itself if Great Britain is to play a part in international affairs. The assistance which this country has given on the great occasions in the past in which it has been one of a coalition opposing the domination of Europe by a great perturbator, has never been confined to the use of economic pressure, nor to the mere defence of her own commerce. It has also, and necessarily, taken the form of rendering direct assistance to her allies in the Mediterranean. She has sent her fleet thither not only to protect her trade but also to carry her armies to co-operate with the allied armies, to enable the armies of her allies to use the sea, to prevent the enemy from enjoying the great advantages of movement by sea, and to eject the enemy from territories he had seized. From the days of William

III it has been in the Mediterranean, through command at sea, that Britain has been able actively to co-operate with other European Powers—Sardinia, the Empire, Spain and Russia—in restraining and compelling compliance by an aggressor.

Moreover, the trade whose safety it is sought to provide by diverting it round the Cape is not the only trade in which Britain has a concern in the Mediterranean. There is a trade also of no small importance with the states on the borders of the Mediterranean—the oil which reaches Haifa by pipe-line, the cotton of Egypt, the exports from the Black Sea. Are we there to run a short gauntlet in the Mediterranean and then make a voyage of circumnavigation round Africa because we are unable to protect it through the two thousand miles of the Mediterranean?

Those who speak so lightly of diverting the trade round the Cape would do well to realize that the importance of the Mediterranean does not arise only from its being a link in the chain of Eastern communications, military and commercial, important as that chain is, but also from the strategical and economic elements involved in the whole problem of the inland sea.

Events in the North Sea and the Channel have loomed so large in the public eye that the importance of the Mediterranean in the late war has tended to be obscured. The fleets of great ships, of Italy and France with their British reinforcements, and of Austria, kept their harbours, but the small craft and the submarine were engaged throughout in a deadly struggle whose outcome at times appeared doubtful. The final adoption of convoy proved successful; it so proved because the superiority of the Allies in their surface craft prevented the surface craft of the enemy from destroying the small vessels which dealt with the submarine. The conditions of another struggle would be different. Whereas then the fast lesser vessels and heavy ships of the enemy could be confined to the immediate neighbourhood of their Adriatic ports, since the risk of operating in the open waters was too great, that would not be the situation in another war. And to that has been added the new weapon in the air which can strike over the heads of the sea forces: illegally, certainly, but recent events have shown conclusively

how little regard is paid today to any engagements made in peace.

It seems to be too little realized today that the defeat of the submarine campaign was due largely to the fact that the submarine had to play a lone hand, unassisted by the other units of the enemy navy. The weak escorts of half a dozen or so light craft which sufficed to protect shipping against submarines would be wholly insufficient to guard it against such massed attacks of surface craft as, in the geographical conditions, would be possible. Strong bodies like those of the old corsair commanders of Dunkirk would threaten every convoy. Nothing indeed is more strange than the blindness which has characterized the naval policy of successive British Governments regarding cruisers and flotilla forces in the complete abandonment of every principle which hitherto had governed their strength. It is a blindness matched in its strangeness by a foreign policy which aims at the security of the Canal by diplomatic engagements with Egypt, while the naval policy fails to make provision for the safety of the shipping in the waters through which it has to pass to reach the Canal. An impregnable position in the Canal zone will serve no purpose, so far as Eastern communications are concerned, if, for want of adequate defence, ships cannot pass between Gibraltar and Port Said. Fears are entertained of the threat to shipping from the air. The eyes of the people have been so continuously directed upward that the happenings on the surface of the sea have not been noticed.

Such justification as there was in the past for a feeling of security lay in the fact that a British fleet at Malta was a threat to any large foreign forces, tending seriously to check any active movements by them. It came therefore as a shock to the public when the crisis recently arose in the Mediterranean, to see the Fleet moved from this, its obvious and proper covering position, to the Eastern extremity of that Sea. Was a fleet in Malta insecure? Could the fleet no longer occupy the only appropriate strategical base?

If there is one factor which runs with unflinching continuity through the history of naval war it is the determining influence of base positions upon control at sea. Whenever British fleets have been unable to avail themselves of bases so placed as to

enable the fleet to dominate all the movements of an enemy, control at sea has been intermittent and partial at the best, and, at the worst, unattainable. Many millions have been spent in latter years in endeavours to make battleships invulnerable—an unattainable ideal, even if it were a practical solution of British security at sea. What is needed now is that our bases shall be as impenetrable to attack from air flotillas as we made them in the past to surface and submarine flotillas. It is the base, not a small proportion of the ships using the base, which must be invulnerable, and money spent upon base security would give strategical power to the fleet out of proportion to its amount. Have we already forgotten the effects of the neglect to make Scapa Flow secure against submarines?

Summing up this aspect of the British situation in the Mediterranean, while the use of the Cape route by shipping may furnish some relief to the efforts at sea in the Mediterranean, its use can be a palliative only. It can serve as a by-pass to reduce the volume of shipping and therefore ease the fleet of some of its defensive functions. But that is all. The need for exercising control in that Sea still remains in order to maintain essential trade, to conduct military movements, and to co-operate, in a general European struggle, with our allies. No greater delusion could be entertained than that the problem at sea in the Mediterranean is to be solved by evasion of one part of our responsibilities.

The needs to be met are threefold. First, a main body of fighting ships of types and in numbers adequate to meet at all times whatever concentration the expected opponent may effect. Secondly, a harbour in which the ships and vessels of this fleet can lie in security, with their needful facilities, so placed that it can mask the enemy main body. Thirdly, a number of vessels of the lesser types sufficient to provide guards against attacks by forces which, no matter how strong the main bodies may be, cannot be confined to their harbours. In all this there is nothing new. It is the merest repetition of the need of all ages, unaffected by whether the ships and vessels are of wood or steel, propelled by the wind or by oil, their guns ranging a thousand or twenty thousand yards. New elements there are, however, in the flotilla which flies, and in the manner in which

modern civilization condones, if indeed it does not openly approve, attack upon the civil population. We are called on to witness bombs being rained upon the non-combatants in the merchant ships. Undoubtedly there is no complete defence against attack in this form, though escorting forces with efficient artillery fire will mitigate its effects. But it is well to recognize certain elements which enter into this form of warfare. At no time, even in that of our greatest superiority at sea, was shipping, even in convoy, immune from loss ; the nimble privateer snapped up many a ship from escorted shipping. Although, moreover, pictures are made of flotillas swarming in the air, there are considerable practical difficulties in the continuous maintenance of effective occupation of, or observation over, a water area through which shipping intermittently passes, and it would be very unwise to assume that such great forces as are pictured would be free to operate in this manner. Finally, if this form of attack upon the non-combatant at sea is made, the enemy non-combatant on land lays himself open to very far-reaching reprisals at the hands of an enemy possessing superiority at sea.

While there has been some recognition, arising out of recent events, that conditions in the Mediterranean have changed since the last war, that recognition, as I have tried to show, has been partial only. It has seen some, but by no means all, of the situation. It is confined almost entirely to a realization that aircraft have introduced two new major factors into the strategy of the Mediterranean. But it is not the Mediterranean alone that demands attention. Another change has attracted the notice of, and given rise to anxiety even more acute in, the Dominions in the Pacific—the growing aggressiveness of Japan.

If the strength of the Navy had been maintained at its old standard the policy of Japan and the outward expression of threats by some writers in that country might have been observed with complacency. The people of Australia and New Zealand have hitherto always recognized that their own security—that is, the integrity of their territory, the maintenance of their internal and commercial policies, and the uninterrupted flow of their trade—depends upon sea power. But as the strength of the Navy relative to that of other Powers has been reduced, and

as the Japanese claim of a need for expansion for her increasing population has taken a threatening turn, these Dominions have felt that their security is no longer assured. From each of them comes the cry that they no longer possess the shield they need and have hitherto possessed. Mr. Hughes, in his book *The Defence of Australia*, and other writers have expressed their fears and expectations that if at some future—perhaps not too remote—time Great Britain should find herself involved in a European War, the whole present British Fleet would be needed, in its full strength, in the European seas; and that then, as Japanese writings give reason to believe, the opportunity to take advantage of the undefended Dominions would be taken. History affords too many examples, both in the more remote and in the immediate past, of such action for these fears to be dismissed as mere scaremongering; and this the more particularly when the policies of so many countries are in the hands of dictatorships. Modern nations have not scrupled in our own lifetime to act upon the principle that one nation's difficulty is their own opportunity, and it does not appear to be beyond the range of possibility that the converse to the Australian fear might take place: trouble in the Far East might form the occasion for an unscrupulous European Power lying upon the lines of communication through the Mediterranean to seek to obtain what it desires from Great Britain in the Mediterranean.

The solution of the problem of security which is receiving attention in the Australasian Dominions is the military solution of local defence. It aims at the creation of such local forces in the form of armies, air forces and small craft—in particular submarines—which shall offer an obstacle to the landing of an army and, if landed, effective opposition to conquest: and to develop local resources in armaments which will render the country independent of external supplies. In other words, that the country shall be made secure by its own efforts.

Such a policy, admirable as its intentions are up to a point, will not, however, provide the realities of defence, for it is a partial, not a complete, solution of the problem of security. Even if it should prove possible for a people of some seven millions successfully to oppose the efforts of a people of seventy millions, with a great naval and military organization, it fails

to provide for the security of those sea communications which are essential to the life of a nation whose only outlet is the sea. Nor, though it aims at providing for local defence, does it furnish complete local defence, since it affords no security to those coastal communications by sea which constitute an integral and important part in the distribution of goods and materials. Whether the railway organization could meet the needs of internal distribution if the coastal services were brought to a standstill may be doubted, but this is clearly a matter for the examination of expert transport authorities. But that it is an element of great importance in security is a matter of no doubt at all. The distress caused by the interruption of the coastal trade in the war of the American Revolution and the war of 1812 is well known to students of those struggles. Optimistic anticipations of the use of aircraft and mines for the defence of the coastal shipping fail to take practical account of the limitations of these instruments—their want of endurance, the conditions of bad weather and darkness, the great uncertainty of such an untested fighting machine.

Apart however from this aspect of the problem of defence of communications, the prospect of such a local system of defence against invasion being effective is open to very serious doubts. No one who has made a study of the many schemes of invasion of these islands by our old antagonists in France can be unaware of the difficulties of defence of a country whose coastline extends over several thousands of miles, with widely separated objectives and therefore an almost unlimited power of making feints and diversions. We, in our time, in our small island never knew where a blow might be delivered, but, having superiority at sea, we were able to mask the main enemy fleet and so render the passage of any large body of troops impossible. Small forces might and occasionally did escape the vigilance at sea, but none of these was of a strength sufficient to effect conquest of the island. Land forces could deal with these lesser detachments. But our case was very different from that of Australia in the conditions supposed. Superiority at sea on the part of the invader confers the power to transport large bodies, to divide them, to threaten simultaneously many positions, to transport by sea and change the point of attack at will and uninterrupted. Until the popula-

tion has greatly increased the power to raise armies on the scale which would be needed does not exist.

In what manner, then, is it possible to give security to these remote Dominions if there is a possibility that the hypothecated situation may arise? To remove the probability of its arising is one answer; but whether the expressed desire for expansion on the part of Japan can be removed is a political question lying outside the realm of naval and military strategy. If it be beyond the power of diplomacy to apply this prophylactic, it remains to devise means which shall either deter the expected aggressor or, if he be not deterred, to ensure the defeat of the attempt. In plain terms, the possibility envisaged is that of a simultaneous attack upon British territory and lines of communication in Europe and Asia. There is one means only by which such attacks can be defeated, and that is superiority at sea which can meet them in both theatres.

In what manner, then, is it practicable to furnish this superiority? Two courses are open—either by means of alliances or by means of our own Imperial efforts.

Whether the country is disposed to commit itself to defensive alliances is a political question on which the opinion of the present writer is valueless. Whether alliances constitute an effective safeguard is a matter of opinion in which experience is a useful witness. Experience, it may be stated with some assurance, shows how little solid trust can be reposed upon guarantees of help. It never can be certain, it would seem, whether an ally will fulfil his obligations: for the record of failure is long and disillusioning. Lord Lansdowne, when considering the advisability of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in June, 1905, recorded his own reading of the experience of alliances.

"History," he wrote, "furnishes many examples of expected assistance not being forthcoming owing to different interpretations being respectively placed on the wording of a Treaty by the parties to it. . . . There is only one guarantee that the Power which signs a Treaty will fulfil the military obligations which the Treaty imposes. It is that the acts which it has bound itself to perform or leave undone are acts which its own interests, and which an intelligent and patriotic view of its own

welfare, require to be done or left undone. In short, for a Treaty to be of real value it must be the expression of permanent interests on both sides."

If corroboration of this opinion be needed it is necessary to do no more than test it in the light of history. Loopholes for escape from the obligations will always be found by those who wish to find them. The Dutch, bound by the Treaty of Westminster of 1678 to join Britain with definitely specified forces if she were attacked, found loopholes large enough to evade performance of their part, both in 1756 and 1779. The grounds in both cases were of the same nature—who was the aggressor? In 1756 their High Mightinesses decided that England was the aggressor, and that hence no *casus fœderis* arose. In 1779 they refused assistance on the ground that their promise of assistance was conditional on the war being a "just" war, and that in making the Treaty Holland had never intended to give up the right "which is in the nature of a defensive alliance, to examine first, and before they grant the required assistance, or take part in the war, the principles of the dissensions that have prevailed, the nature of the differences from which they sprang: as also to investigate and maturely weigh the reasons and motives which may enforce the *casus fœderis*, and which are to form the basis of the equity and lawfulness of the war, on the part of that confederate state claiming the aforesaid assistance." In other words, it was most dangerous to Holland, threatened as she was by France if she should move to the help of Great Britain, to fulfil her obligations, and reasons in plenty could be found for not doing so. She had nothing to gain and everything to lose. The interests of the ally, as Geffcken wrote, have in fact always been the greatest weight in the balance. They form the determining factor.

With so great a wealth of experience, confirmed as it has been by many recent events both before and after the institution of the League of Nations, it would assuredly be the very height of unwisdom in a world ruled and directed as the world is today, to confide the security of the Empire to promises so uncertain of fulfilment. It remains, therefore, to take such steps with our own resources as are required to render ourselves secure by our own efforts, diplomacy playing its part by double-locking the

door, and by the friendly relations which it is able to create with other Powers.

The key of all success lies in the concentration of effort. Surrender could be forced upon the Empire either by a blow at the heart or the destruction of its communications. The outlying Dominions cannot survive if their mainstay is defeated. Neither the United Kingdom nor the Dominions can survive if their communications are destroyed. Superiority at sea will, as it has hitherto done, provide security against water-borne invasion either of the United Kingdom or of the outer Dominions; it cannot provide security against an air-borne blow from those countries which lie within the effective range of combatant flight. But no blows of a vital nature are practicable against the outer Dominions by air so long as command at sea is retained. Security of communications can be furnished by sea-power only; but the word "sea-power" does not imply merely the possession of water-borne force. It means a navy composed of all those weapon carriers which are capable of taking effective part in the operations at sea—surface vessels, submarine and aerial craft all form integral parts of a navy of today. It means also that that navy has the use of secure bases; for without them those vessels and craft cannot operate.

The vital common problem of the Empire therefore is the establishment of its sea-power. Many years ago it was realized that the time was coming when the burden of maintaining its sea power would become too heavy for the people of this country alone. As security of the sea communications is the common need of all the nations of the Empire, as the benefit of this security is shared by all, so the provision of the sea power which alone can secure safe passage for the trade of all and for the troops which require to pass to the assistance of any threatened part is the first and indispensable responsibility of all. Economy, in its true connotation of wise spending, is not served by expenditure upon local defence which cannot keep open the sea routes nor suffice, unaided, to meet an attack on the scale contemplated in the hypothesis of a simultaneous war in Europe and Asia. Local defence is necessary up to a definite point. It must be sufficient to repel such raids as we may reasonably

calculate may be made, as they have been in the past, by evasion, and to hold out for a period defined as the "period before relief." There is a danger of over-estimating the scale and nature of such attacks.

As long ago as the year 1887 the danger of what he called "territorialism" in the Empire was foreseen by Jan Hofmeyr. He saw then that there was a tendency to think in terms of local interests in contradistinction to regarding the defence of the Empire as a whole. What is now needed to avert those risks, both in the Mediterranean and at the Antipodes, is co-operation in a general scheme based upon the sound principle of a common effort to establish and maintain the common need—superiority at sea. This is the only sound basis for expenditure on Imperial, as distinguished from local, defence. The time has certainly come when, if we are not to suffer the fate of being destroyed in detail from an inability to assist each other or to maintain the trade which is the lifeblood of all of our communities, we should combine in building the sound foundation upon which the security of all of us depends—sea-power.

DEFENCELESS NEW ZEALAND

BY DONALD COWIE

AT a time when all the talk is of national security and defence it may be permissible to say a word or two about the most defenceless country in the world—New Zealand.

Like other modern nations this Dominion relies for protection upon an army, a navy, and an air force. The army consists of a permanent force, a territorial force, and several corps of school cadets. On May 30th, 1935, the strength of the permanent force stood at 92 officers, 11 staff cadets, and 421 other ranks. It is divided elaborately into regiments and corps, the perfect skeleton, as it has been called, of an army. But, naturally, you can tramp up and down the length and breadth of New Zealand and not meet a man in khaki. One of the first impressions of the New Zealand visitor to England is of an essentially militaristic population.

Prior to 1931 terms of service in school cadet corps and the territorial force were obligatory for every male New Zealander. Since 1931 the compulsory provisions of the Defence Act have not been enforced, but this has been for the sake of economy rather than in response to public opinion, and the Government could re-impose conscription at any time if they so desired. There would be no necessity for special legislation. The territorial force now comprises 779 officers and 11,512 other ranks, all enrolled under a voluntary agreement to serve for three years. The force is liable for service in any part of New Zealand, but could not be compelled to fight outside the Dominion. During the year it carries out 36 hours' training in drills and parades, and six days' continuous training in camp. Needless to say, there are no mechanised units in the modern sense of the term. The cavalry work is, of course, as fine as anything since Waterloo.

The strength of the various school cadet corps on March 31st, 1935, was 362 officers and 16,662 other ranks. It is not compulsory for boys to take any part in school military training, and it is rumoured that the new Labour Government, militantly pacific, may prohibit cadet training altogether.

The net expenditure on military defence during 1934-35 was £321,700, as compared with £156,311 in 1931-32, and £453,580 in 1927-28.

The New Zealand Air Force today (last figures, May 30th, 1935), comprises no more than 28 service aircraft, half of which are obsolete, and a personnel of ten officers, 101 other permanent ranks, and 85 territorial officers.

In 1887 New Zealand agreed to pay part of the cost of a naval force "to protect trade in Australian and New Zealand waters." In 1934-35 the Dominion paid £568,454 towards the cost of naval defence, inclusive of £100,000 for the Singapore Base, and £30,614 as debt charges on loan-money raised for building the gift-cruiser "New Zealand" in 1909. Today the New Zealand Division of the Royal Navy consists of two light cruisers, two sloops, and a minesweeper, mostly obsolete, with a personnel of 63 officers, 943 other ranks, and 33 ratings in England for courses. There is a Royal Naval Reserve of 101 officers and 1,408 other ranks. They are a fine body of men, and most of them have an expert knowledge of the handling of small craft.

That is all.

Half a century ago New Zealand was three to six months' voyage from Great Britain. Today the voyage takes five to six weeks by direct vessels. But within a short time people will be landing in New Zealand in five days after starting from England. Imperial Airways will link up London and New Zealand in a few days' journey, and Pan-American Airways will bring Auckland to within 35 flying hours of the United States. No longer will the "shy" Dominion be able to boast of her isolation. With Australia and several Pacific islands a few hours distant by air she will have to enter the struggle for existence.

Coincidentally she will realize that her fair land consists almost entirely of vulnerable coastline, and that the only war machine capable of protecting her is urgently needed at the other side

of the world. The British Navy is no longer on a two-Power standard. Most British experts believe that the Navy, as at present constituted, would find it exceedingly difficult to preserve order in European waters were there to be sudden world war. Under no circumstances could Britain afford to send half her fleet permanently to the Antipodes. But easily half the Navy would be needed to protect Australia and New Zealand, and the protection, in time of universal war, would have to be sustained.

Left dependent upon her own defence forces New Zealand would be an easy prey. It is manifestly ridiculous that her Naval Division would be able to repulse a determined invader. With the best heart in the world two light cruisers could not be in a hundred or more vulnerable places at once. And New Zealand is within the sphere of influence of Japan, whose navy is one of the largest and most efficient in the world, whose aims are avowedly imperialistic, and whose polite attention has been upon the Dominion for some considerable time. In the event of war a small section of the Japanese Fleet could sail down to New Zealand, destroy both the light cruisers, and disembark large landing parties from protected troop ships. Aircraft carriers with the invaders could bring sufficient up-to-date fighting 'planes to vanquish the Lilliputian New Zealand Air Force in an hour. Once ashore the invaders need not fear opposition for several days. If they landed in the fertile but sparsely populated Marlborough district they would have time to dig themselves in very thoroughly before defenders arrived. Even if they landed in Wellington Harbour or on the shores of Pegasus Bay they would not meet anything like an opposing army. Their baby tanks, chemical barrages, and remarkable light artillery would certainly make short work of any impetuous New Zealanders who happened to stand naked in their way. By the time warships and aeroplanes arrived from the other side of the world to protect New Zealand the country would be a Japanese protectorate.

I am not a militarist, and I am not exaggerating New Zealand's and our weakness. I have lived in the Dominion; I have served in its territorial force; and I have all the facts and figures at my finger-tips. I believe that most thinking New Zealanders

are as uneasy about the position as I am. Towards the end of last year there was a real war scare at the Antipodes. New Zealanders feared a conflict between Great Britain and Italy, because they realized that such an eventuality would leave their own country open to immediate attack from another quarter. New Zealand at present obtains all her supplies of artillery, ammunition, and aircraft bombs from Great Britain. She has no workable oil. Her only advantage, indeed, despite the paucity of her population, is that she possesses a uniformly virile man-power.

Out in New Zealand, as I have already remarked, intelligent people realize their country's vulnerability. But even the intelligent ones have passive minds. They have for so long placed faith in the power of the British Navy to protect them that they cannot conceive of any other form of protection. This attitude was expressed by the Rt. Hon. G. W. Forbes last year when he told a Canadian reporter: "No discussion has taken place in New Zealand as to participation or non-participation in a future war involving the Empire. New Zealanders are confident that Britain will always be on the side of peace and will make no commitments not absolutely necessary. We do not have to discuss those things."

In direct reaction to this point of view New Zealand radicals are even less inclined to take active steps for the protection of their country. To the question, "Would you resist, without question, a threatened invasion of New Zealand?" only 62.26 per cent. of students of the University of New Zealand who filled in a recent questionnaire answered Yes, 28.66 per cent. answered No, and 9.09 per cent. were doubtful. To the question, "Would you take part in a war to assist Britain, no matter what were the causes or the occasion to which Britain had committed herself?" 28.19 per cent. answered Yes, 59.19 per cent. No., and 12.61 per cent. were doubtful. In the event of war, 27.23 per cent. would enlist or urge their friends to do so, 56.15 per cent. would not, and 16.62 per cent. were doubtful.

Some New Zealand students of foreign affairs and politicians play with the idea of invoking the protection of the United States of America in event of war, whereas others favour a protective alliance with Japan. But as soon as they realize their

impotence to adopt any policy towards these countries unless it falls in broadly with the policy of Great Britain they quickly lose interest in a well-nigh insoluble problem.

The fact is that Great Britain is still expected by most New Zealanders to take the initiative in Pacific affairs ; and, if this country does not take the initiative, then nobody will. There is a responsibility to be taken up by Westminster and Whitehall, and it is by no means a gratuitous one. Some millions of pounds of British capital are invested in New Zealand, and the return from these millions up till now has been fairly constant. Our exports to New Zealand are a small proportion of our total exports, but they have been steadily increasing, and there is no reason why they should not continue to increase. We obtain a large proportion of our lamb, mutton, butter, and wool from New Zealand, and practically all our imported cheese. If both New Zealand and Australia were cut off from us in wartime we should have to find substitutes for their products or starve.

I suggest that if we are going to re-arm we should do it intelligently. A scheme of Imperial defence that ignores the Dominions, or involves them fortuitously, is a contradiction in terms. The money that is going to be spent upon rearmament in the next few years should be increased by contributions from the Dominions, and the rearmament, after consultation with the Dominions, should apply not only to this country but to the Empire.

Before I left England I was a pacifist, and I hope that I still hate and detest the very sound of the word "war." But, after traversing the world and living for some years in a distant Dominion, I have reached the conclusion that it is impossible to remain an Englishman and a pacifist without laying oneself open to a charge of hypocrisy. We don't want to lose Australia and New Zealand. Therefore we must be prepared to fight for them and protect them, or at least supply them with the wherewithal to protect themselves.

THE DESPOT AND THE ARTS

BY HILAIRE BELLOC

THERE is in Europe now a strong tendency to what its supporters call "totalitarian government." The old-fashioned name for that kind of thing was despotism, and perhaps it is better to keep to the old title because everybody knows what it means. If these despotic governments remain powerful, and still more if their system spreads, the effects on the arts will certainly be marked, particularly upon the literary arts, because it is by these that men express themselves and by these they are moved to various political and other emotions.

What effect will the despot have upon the fortunes of the writing man and his audience? The first answer that would be given to such a question by anyone brought up under the old Liberal traditions of Europe would be that despotism is fatal to art of all kinds. The essence (we should be told) of art is freedom. Because, any art being the self-expression of the artist, if he is constrained in any way his activity will be maimed. But the supporters of the new despotic form of government in Europe deny the value of this argument under modern conditions. What they say is that under modern conditions art is debased by two things, the taste of the mob, and what is closely associated with that, the power of great sums of money. They would say that art in a highly developed civilization is always subject to restrictions and it is simply a choice of what kind of restriction you prefer. Even in the most liberal state and one with the highest public taste there is a certain amount of censorship, especially upon stage plays, and there must be such, otherwise there would be no limit to the obscenity and blasphemy which might be put before the people, to the destruction of society.

Violent extremes always attract by novelty and the acuteness of sensation which they provide for the moment. The tendency therefore if there were no censorship of stage plays

would be for the most disgusting and degrading extremes of violent emotion to be pandered to.

But (say those who now support despotic government) today there is no practical question of censorship by public good taste, for public good taste has disappeared. The proletarian herds of our modern industrial cities will either demand the worst or be given the worst by their few plutocratic masters. It is better for them and for the world that limits should be chosen and imposed by men who, being all powerful, cannot be bought and cannot be deceived.

They have also an argument from history which is a very powerful one. It is simply this: that the best work in every department of art, and particularly in dramatic art, has been done under strong central governments. There have been exceptions to the contrary. But that has been the rule. There is no good art without a patron, and when an all-powerful monarch is the chief patron art should naturally be at its best. One spirit acting with intensity and summarizing the energies of the whole community inspires all that is done. Florence was at its best under the Medicis. French drama was at its highest under Louis XIV—and so on.

To this the other side reply: "None of the old central governments acted with the complete despotism of the modern centralized governments. These have certainly killed political expression in the press and the art of political discussion; their strength is so absolute and their influence so universal that the same deadening must appear in whatever else they affect, and particularly will that loss of vitality be apparent in the drama."

But the new despotic governments answer this by saying that you can actually see them at work and discover that they have no such evil effects. The only thing (they say) which is in practice prohibited is something which is nearly always productive of bad dramatic work, and that is revolutionary doctrine: attack upon authority. If you do not attack the executive of the state your art will be left perfectly free. What is more, it will be rescued from the vulgarity and decline which invariably accompany the control of the state by mere wealth. Today in all countries boasting of freedom, in all large countries at any rate, capitalism has become completely master. Now the

despot has for his chief task the fighting of the money power. Napoleon put it in one of his innumerable terse and striking judgments : " The only instrument mankind has ever discovered for defeating the money power is monarchy."

It is indeed principally upon this plea of reversing and amending the increasing evil results of capitalism that the modern despots have seized upon power. Whether they call themselves openly Communists as at Moscow, or rather Nationalists as at Berlin and at Rome, the mass support they get—and it is very solid and looks like being enduring—comes from the popular feeling that they do at any rate master the mere power of gold.

It is the excesses of capitalism which have produced the modern despotic governments, and hitherto we can see for ourselves (say their supporters) that the system works well, fills society with most active life and therefore must of its nature inspire the arts.

You meet men all over Europe, men at once intelligent and enthusiastic who will tell you that the revival of the arts, and with them of the drama, must come today and can only come today from society under absolute centralized government. These men talk everywhere of the new world which is being born. They associate this new world with the presence of irresistible central government under a leader or leaders whose function it is to incarnate all the society which they control. In that new world art will, like everything else, be new-born. We shall have a Renaissance after the deserved breakdown of nineteenth century capitalism, and in that Renaissance we shall find glories which we could not have dreamt of in the old unhappy state of things where most men were driven by competition to a life of such grinding anxiety, and usually of poverty as well, that there could be no room for art. When it is pointed out to them that the new despotic states have as a fact produced very little worth seeing or reading, and that in particular the drama has been sterile, they answer that we must give the new experiment more time, and that anyhow its productions are not below the very low standard of the recent past.

There is another argument. The despotic state has at its disposal for the patronage of the arts unlimited funds. Today the painter for instance is dependent upon the caprice of a few

individual rich men, most of whom have become rich by the exercise of cunning or worse, and are cast in a mould fatal to the understanding of art in any form. This is less true of the drama, but it is largely true of the drama also, and certainly of that press by which the drama is judged and advertised.

Now all these arguments in favour of the novel experiment in despotism which we see all around us in Europe (and which is manifestly growing in power) must be appreciated if we are to understand the virtues as well as the errors which would appear before us in the near future. The arguments in favour of despotism are weak from the moral side; they are not very strong upon the political side, but on the economic side they are formidable and on the æsthetic side they are strongest of all.

But even on the æsthetic side there is one underlying weakness which the supporters of despotism never face. It may be very simply stated and has been stated in the fullest clarity by every great thinker on politics and art who has attempted to teach mankind during the last three thousand years of Western civilization.

It is simply this. That whether a despotism be of good or bad effect in any department, but particularly in art, depends upon the despot, his philosophy and his ability.

From this there flows a conclusion upon the new despotic experiment proceeding so rapidly in the Old World and spreading over so widely extended a field, which conclusion no public man seems as yet to have voiced. The conclusion is this, that despotic governments will very soon prove to be of the most varied kind. Despotism will not make for a universal type: quite the other way. It will make for very different results indeed according to the difference between the despots themselves and the material upon which they work.

Anyone can see for himself, for instance, the strong contrast between the effect of Fascism in Italy upon the arts—especially upon architecture—and the effect of the Nazi despotism in Prussianized Germany. Modern Italian building is majestic and modern planning in Italy of cities and their approaches is admirable. Nazi Prussianized Germany is even more despotic than Fascist Italy, but its public work is deplorable. It builds fine great roads which necessitate fine great bridges, and the

bridges are as ugly as sin. It puts up huge buildings which are an eyesore, and when it ventures upon initiating a dramatic expression—such as the Hindenburg Funeral—it lapses into ridiculous melodrama, whereas Fascist Italy produces pageants of unforgettable splendour.

What the strange Moscow despotism does in the way of art I cannot judge, for I have not seen it at work. So far as pictures are any guide it seems to revel in the offensive.

This general conclusion that despotic government as it increases its area of action will breed strongly contrasting diversities of artistic experience has a very important political and social side to it. Those despotisms which are inspired by a strong artistic sense may well become models even for the societies which still retain institutions nominally free.

The Nazi blunders in art, the Communist offensiveness therein, would move no foreigner to copy them, except perhaps from pure snobbishness, the desire to do what is novel merely because it is novel: the worst, because the most irrational of all criteria. But any modern society may be proud to produce, if they can be produced, under conditions of a general voting, parliaments, millionaire newspaper owners and the rest, such sights as modern Fascist Italy can show.

I do not think that the citizens of countries still attached to Liberal formulæ (such as Ireland, England and France, Belgium and Holland) will easily fall under despotic forms of government. There is something so well established in their civic traditions that unlimited and absolute power in one centre is too repugnant to them to be adopted. Moreover they have never fallen as yet into such a chaos as the German Reich suffered after the War, or the social system of Italy before the Fascist Revolution. They have less motive for establishing despotism than men had in the Reich or in Italy, and they are less suited to obeying a despotism. But I do think that in the arts, and ultimately in drama as in all the other arts, a despotism which proves itself successful in the exhibition through art of beauty and majesty may easily become a model for the nations still possessing something of the old Liberal tone. I think it possible that a despotism guided by high taste and rewarding through artistic genius may rescue societies of other political type from artistic chaos.

WHEN KNIGHTS ARE BOLD

BY MALCOLM MUGGERIDGE

IT is delightfully ironical that Sir Bernard Pares should like the Soviet regime and Sir Walter Citrine dislike it. Sir Bernard's *Moscow Admits a Critic** is full of appreciation, Sir Walter's *I Search for Truth in Russia*† is full of acute common-sense disapproval. The Liberal and sometime supporter of Kerensky finds the Dictatorship of the Proletariat a promising growth, the trade union leader and Socialist asks: "To whom are the proletariat dictating if there are now no capitalists, no kulaks, only one hundred and seventy million proletarians?" and does not get an answer. It is as though a free-thinker should admit, after being shown round Heaven, that it wasn't so bad, while a bishop complained that its general organization left much to be desired and that the heavenly hosts lacked animation.

"Intourist" has not been happy in its handling of trade union leaders. Men of letters like Mr. Shaw have presented few difficulties, emotional politicians of the Centre like M. Herriot were flames that scarcely needed even fanning, if the Webbs grew uneasy statistics sufficed to quieten them, clergymen and Quakers were conveniently deflected from queues to *crèches*; but trade union leaders proved stubborn. They have an irritating way of asking the price of this and that, and how much such a grade of worker receives and how much such another, and then relating prices and wages. It is not enough to show them a block of flats and murmur "workers' dwellings" to win an approving smile. They examine the block of flats, and make rapid calculations to find out whether provision of housing is keeping pace with population growth, and ask about rent and how new flats are allocated. They betray a lamentable familiarity with the working of the piece rate system, and lack the intellectual subtlety necessary to differentiate between Capitalist

* *Nelson*, 2s. 6d.

† *Routledge*, 10s. 6d.

competition and the Socialist speed up; worst of all, they often bring wives with them who make disparaging comments on the quality and prices of goods displayed for sale in Soviet shops. One such visiting trade unionist long remained a bitter Intourist memory. He was an ex-checkweighman, who ate and drank all he was offered, stared stolidly at all he was shown, responded amiably to fraternal greetings, and when asked what he would like to see next invariably replied: "Want to go down in't mine." It almost drove his interpreter mad. The Park of Culture and Rest failed to satisfy him, graphs and statistics and plans of future Socialist cities left him unexcited, not even anti-God museums were enthralling enough to turn him from his single purpose. At last in desperation he was taken down a mine, formed his opinion—a bad one—about the way it was being worked, and returned to England satisfied with his visit.

This method of forming an opinion about the Soviet regime on a basis of understood details rather than general principles may seem absurdly limited to those accustomed to making panoramic judgments, but it has its advantages. It has been the method employed by Sir Walter Citrine. He considered the U.S.S.R. not as a potential classless, Socialist society, not even as a potential ally against German aggression, but as a place where people lived, and asked himself whether the sort of life available for them there was better than the one available for similar people elsewhere. On the whole he decided it was not. He found by asking a few simple questions that wages were lower, prices higher, the struggle to keep alive more strenuous, housing conditions worse in the U.S.S.R. than in England and other countries he had visited. The absence of all freedom of speech, the monotonous adulation of Stalin and the other leaders, the fatuous deceptions that were practised on him irritated, and he was confirmed in his opinion that trade unionism as he understood it had been as ruthlessly stamped out under a Dictatorship of the Proletariat as under any other dictatorship.

Sir Bernard Pares was not interested in such matters. Having made up his mind that Bolshevism was a lesser evil than Nazi-ism, he read a sense of purpose into each face that passed him by in the streets of Moscow, repented of past misdemeanours

and made his peace with the Soviet Government. Were there not still forty churches left, and did they not fill on New Year's Day? To register his proletarian sympathies and to be in the fashion he wore the cap he reserved at home for going to League football matches, and lent an uncritical ear to all he was told. Surely, he thought, cloth capped, it is the same old Russia. There had been excesses certainly. Old friends had died or vanished, peasants had starved, but a new underground railway and a new Constitution on the way recompensed for much. It was not quite government of the people by the people for the people, since only one political party was allowed to exist, not quite—yet; but with Hitler across the frontier it did not do to be too pernickety. If it was a question of taking Stalin or Hitler to his bosom, then he knew which he would choose. He took Stalin to his bosom, and the *Daily Worker* threw in its blessing.

Neither Sir Walter's nor Sir Bernard's testimony is likely now to make much difference. The matter at issue has passed beyond the realm of testimony. If Lenin himself stepped out of his glass case and announced that what had come to pass in Russia was not a classless, socialist society but a brutal form of State Capitalism, with its new privileged governing class and old dreams of world domination, he would be as little heeded in Russia as if Christ had returned to earth to repudiate Saint Paul. Years of intensive Socialist salesmanship have borne fruit, and it will be for future historians, not us, to enjoy the joke of dictatorship being cast out in the name of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, of peace being safeguarded by the prophets of world revolution, of Democracy being championed by the parent Totalitarian State.

Sir Bernard is one of many prodigals. The Webbs, as apostles of gradualness, frowned on ungradual Lenin, but now write of a new civilization; Lord Beaverbrook has come to feel that a regime which avails itself of Schiaparelli's services cannot be wholly bad; Mr. Lloyd George, a leading spirit in the Intervention, now numbers the U.S.S.R. amongst the virtuous Powers; even *The Times* sees a Pink Dawn where formerly it saw only darkness. These notable conversions are all based on the supposition that an essential change has taken place in the

character of the Soviet regime. No longer, it is felt, is the main objective to bring about the circumstances for world revolution. Marxism has become as ceremonial a creed as the Sermon on the Mount, referred to now and again in the speeches of Stalin and his colleagues as the blessedness of the meek is referred to now and again by bishops, but not seriously meant; the Comintern, though still technically in existence, has become an impotent body, and the new Russian governing class, if it has not yet acquired the good breeding of the one it replaced, is on the way to doing so, stands socially about where a self-made industrial magnate does when he receives his peerage. These comfortable suppositions have been confirmed by recent changes like the tightening up of the marriage laws, the resurrection of patriotism and family ties, the revival of military titles and of payment by results, and measures to stabilise the currency, all of which suggest that the time will soon come when a dress shirt will be as congenial in Moscow as on the Riviera, Thomas Cook and Son have an office in the Red Square, and Stalin become one of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals honorary Vice-Presidents.

If Sir Walter Citrine is not so confident that the Russian Revolution is to end in Democracy living happily ever after, it is because he has had first-hand experience of the workings of the Comintern. He knows how autocratic and unscrupulous are its methods, how much it had to do with the collapse of the Left in Germany and the consequent establishment of Hitler in power, how cynically it is prepared to sacrifice working-class interests in other countries for the convenience of the Soviet Government. Has he not himself conducted negotiations with the Third International, and been the object of its venomous attacks because he frankly said that proletarian solidarity did not mean just accepting orders from Moscow? Is he not even now being blackguarded because he has ventured to criticize the Soviet regime, to estimate for himself wage scales and cost of living in the U.S.S.R. instead of accepting and then echoing all he was told? Independence of mind is the sin of sins in any Totalitarian State. It does not worry Sir Bernard Pares that the values he has believed in have no place under a Dictatorship of the Proletariat, nor worry Mr. Bernard Shaw that if he had

happened to be a Russian his pen would have been idle since 1917, nor worry the Webbs that as Soviet citizens they would have had to relate all their sociological data to a constantly changing Party Line; but Sir Walter Citrine has no liking for being dictated to, being told what he may read and what not, whom he may admire and who not, what is of good repute and what of bad. He, at any rate, is not prepared to forget old associates because they have been exiled to Siberia or shot. Mere propaganda stinks in his nostrils even when he is in sympathy with the principles it aims to uphold. His horror of Nazi-ism is not so great that it will blind him to the faults of what Nazi-ism opposes, his Socialism not so fanatically held that whatever calls itself Socialist is thereby sanctified and above criticism.

In *Moscow Admits a Critic*, Sir Bernard Pares thanks Hitler for enabling him to obtain a Soviet visa. As the advent of Hitler to power, he implies, made him look more sympathetically on the U.S.S.R., so did it make the Soviet Government look more sympathetically on him. It wanted allies as he did against a common enemy. The Marxist lion shall lie down with the Liberal lamb, and Sir Bernard shall lead them. It is a strange vision—the remnants of European Liberalism finding a champion in the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, pacifists and internationalists and humanitarians, all enlightened persons, grouping themselves round the Red Flag in defiance of the Swastika. In the same way Tsarist Russia came into a war to make the world safe for Democracy. The stock Marxist argument, used for instance with particular force by Prince Mirsky, an ex-colleague of Sir Bernard's and now a fellow Friend of the Soviet Union, has been that the Capitalist Powers must inevitably destroy one another, and that when this happened the Dictatorship of the Proletariat would inherit the earth. Every rumour of war was as welcome to Marxists as horrifying to their pacifist admirers because it meant that the overthrow of Capitalism was approaching. The idea of France and Great Britain and Germany becoming involved in another and more ruinous conflict was Moscow's comfort in time of trouble. Belts might have to be tightened, collectivization of agriculture bring famine in its wake, but there was always the hope that at any moment the glad tidings might come of German and British and French

soldiers killing one another, thereby fulfilling the law and the prophets.

In pursuance of this hope the Soviet Government assisted the rearmament of Germany and employed its influence to expedite the collapse of the Versailles settlement. Diplomatically, it was ranged on the side of the anti-*status-quo* Powers, not because it had any sympathy with their grievances but because that was the most effective way to foment war. The triumph of the Nazis in Germany altered the situation—apart, of course, from getting Sir Bernard his visa—only in so far as it created an immediate fear that the U.S.S.R. might be attacked before the Capitalist Powers destroyed one another. Under the stimulus of this fear Soviet foreign policy, and with it the Comintern's underwent a drastic change. The League, formerly a hypocritical attempt to make Imperialism respectable, became worthy of the support of the toiling masses ; France, instead of a wicked uncle, was a noble ally. It was as though a party of Seventh Day Adventists, praying for the end of the world and listening delightedly to distant rumbles of thunder which seemed to presage its coming, should, when the thunder grew nearer and the very ground beneath their feet began to quake, suddenly pray for its postponement at least until they had moved to a more convenient place to witness its coming.

The sincerity of Hitler's declarations of his pacific intentions has been legitimately questioned on the ground that previous utterances were in a very different strain. The Soviet Government's ostensible change of heart is, in the eyes of Liberals like Sir Bernard Pares, of unquestioned genuineness. Has not the French Government accepted it as such ? Is not the U.S.S.R. now a signatory of the League Covenant, and therefore prepared to fight to preserve the European *status quo* ? Until a year or so ago the drift of the Soviet Press, of Stalin's speeches in his capacity of head of the Comintern, of the propaganda that filtered down from the Communist party ideologues to rank-and-file party members and from them to all sections of the population as well as to Communist organizations abroad, was that the great justification of the Russian Revolution would be the precipitating of similar revolutions elsewhere. In films, in plays, in school text-books a stock hero was the active revolu-

tionary on the Foreign Front, working away to disrupt Capitalist societies from within, arranging for the speedy liquidation of Sir Bernard Pares and all he represents. Has fear of Germany put an end to all this ? Or is it merely in abeyance until the threat of German expansion eastwards is less urgent ?

Sir Walter Citrine is inclined to take the latter view. Regarding the possibility of co-operation between British and Soviet trade unions in resisting Fascism and war, he asks himself : " Do the Communists of Russia and the British trade unions believe with equal sincerity in the thing they wish to defend ? " If it is Democracy that is to be defended, Communists despise it as heartily as Fascists, yet profess themselves anxious to combine with the workers of other countries in its defence. They want to avoid war certainly, but " despise and denounce pacifism," and advocate violent revolution which " must lead to civil war and bloodshed," What then is their real purpose in offering their co-operation in defending a political system for which they have nothing but contempt, and in preventing the outbreak of a war which, in that it presaged the coming of civil wars and revolutions, they used to regard as their great opportunity ? " I seem to recollect," Sir Walter writes, " something that Dimitrov said, at a meeting in August of the Communist International, about employing the tactics of the wooden horse of Troy to defeat the opponents of Communism." In other words, the formation of a Common Front with political and trade union organizations that were formerly anathema is designed to disrupt from within what could not be disrupted from without.

" For years the tactics of the Communists in Britain and elsewhere aimed at weakening the faith of the workers in trade unionism. They tried to show that it was inadequate and ineffective. They strove to undermine the confidence of the workers in their leaders. That explains why day after day and year after year a campaign of vilification and abuse has been conducted against such people as myself. We are represented as being in the pay of the capitalists, and never given any credit for sincerity of principle or motive at all. I well remember reading to the Trade Union Congress some years ago the statement of Losovsky, the Secretary of the Red International of Trade Unions, where he said that the object of the Communist party must be to destroy the trade union apparatus. That seemed to me quite logical. But fortunately the attempt to form break-away unions in Great Britain failed. The Communists have become politically and industrially impotent. Then they tried to permeate the trade unions and they failed at this tactic too."

Now their tactics are to combine not merely with "reformist" trade unions and trade union leaders like Sir Walter Citrine, but with Radicals and Liberals as well, but still with the same ultimate object—the destruction of parliamentarism, and the establishment of a Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

How is it possible, Sir Walter asks, to protest against infringements of civil liberty in Fascist countries in alliance with the Communist party which has as drastically infringed civil liberty in the U.S.S.R.? "The methods employed are largely the same. All have their secret police, and employ arbitrary arrest and imprisonment. What is the difference in that respect between the Russian Ogpu, the Gestapo of Germany and the Ovra of Italy? They are all endowed with wide powers of arrest and imprisonment. Russia, too, has suppressed all political opposition. Liberty of speech, freedom of the Press and public meeting are denied to all but the Communist party." Sir Bernard Pares does not feel the same compunction. He was so surprised and delighted not to be followed about himself when he was in Moscow that he was ready to assume that no one was followed about. Or perhaps the prevailing atmosphere of terrorism, which Sir Walter Citrine noted and disliked, was part of the resemblance between pre- and post-Revolution Russia which so comforted him.

In so far as the tendency amongst Liberals to look sympathetically on the Soviet regime is based on the supposition that it is now as greedy, class-ridden, imperialistic and unequalitarian as any other, they are justified. To each according to his needs has long ago been replaced by the more usual and respectable slogan—to each what he can grab. The privileges that go with membership of the Communist party led long ago to economic and social inequality, and the spur to work long ago became in the U.S.S.R., as elsewhere, greed fortified by fear. The soldier swaggers in the streets of Moscow as he does in the streets of Berlin or Rome because he represents force, and force is the ultimate sanction. Adulation rises everlastingly from newspapers, hoardings, demonstrations, up to Stalin because he is in authority, and whoever is in authority is good. The strong are fawned on by the weak, and whoever falls is kicked. The Humble and Meek who were exalted when the Revolution

put down the Mighty from their seats soon learnt the ways of their predecessors, and settled down to the task of ensuring that no Humble and Meek should ever put them down. By thus conforming with the ways of the Mighty in all ages and in all places they have soothed many fears, and gained many new and important friends, if at the same time losing a few unimportant ones.

If, however, the Soviet regime has hardened as the years have passed into a mere autocracy, it does not necessarily mean that the U.S.S.R. is a useful ally, or even that the Comintern is no longer dangerous. Lenin's dreams of world proletarian revolution had a queer mystical flavour, like the Book of Revelations, and it is easy to imagine wars of conquest ostensibly to free the workers of the countries conquered from the chains of Capitalism, a War of Jenkins's Hours of Work instead of a War of Jenkins's Ear. Indeed, some foretaste of what may happen has been provided in Outer Mongolia, which has been as effectively conquered by Soviet troops as Abyssinia by Italian troops, and countries where the Governments are dependent on Communist support are likely to find how arbitrary and changeable Moscow's orders are, and how subservient to the Soviet Government, whose policy today is to encircle Germany but tomorrow may be aiming at a German alliance, just as it was at one point ready to be the first to recognise Japan's ill-gotten gains in Manchuria in return for a Japanese-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact and to range itself with France in defence of Italian Imperialism in the hope of recreating the anti-German Stresa Front.

There can, in any case, be no effective collaboration between the two democracies of Western Europe and the U.S.S.R. Rightly or wrongly they believe that peace is attainable, whereas the Soviet Government, struggling by any means at its disposal to safeguard itself against an immediate threat of invasion, is convinced that war is inevitable, even if the U.S.S.R. were not involved, desirable. Just as Lenin signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk to gain a breathing space and without the smallest intention of observing its provisions, so his successor has signed the League Covenant. If Germany attacks eastwards the Covenant will be invoked and the toiling masses in all parts of

the world called on to defend the Soviet Fatherland ; if westwards, not a Red soldier or aeroplane will move, and the toiling masses will be told to hold their fire until the warring Capitalist Powers are spent and then prepare to receive their deliverers from Moscow. Soviet Communism cannot rally anti-Fascist forces, because it is just the same as Fascism. Both represent hatred of the individual and contempt for all individual rights, an attempt to create an ant State, the mob worshipping the mob as personified in a Leader. Their slogans are different but their technique is the same.

If non-Fascist and non-Communist Europe has no answer to either but to side with one against the other it is doomed indeed, like Indian Maharajahs who tried to sustain their waning authority by invoking the help of French or British invaders. If the Totalitarian steam-roller is to pass over us it does not matter much which particular roller does the job. We shall be flattened out just the same.

CHINA'S DILEMMA—WILL SHE FIGHT?

BY GEORGE E. TAYLOR

THE East is aflame with undeclared war. The struggle is in China, but the conflict concerns the power and interests of the Japanese and British Empires. This war is being fought with economic and political weapons. For example, the Customs smuggling in North China, made possible by Japanese actions, is a form of economic sanctions on both China and Britain. It undermines British trade, endangers the payments on British loans, and robs Nanking of both revenue and authority. Every blow struck at China is a blow struck at the British Empire. The refusal of the Japanese to do anything effective to stop the smuggling is an answer to the Chinese currency reforms of November, 1935, which were so strongly supported by British banks. A further indication of the tenseness of the situation is the tendency for the financial centre to move from Shanghai to Hongkong. Financial initiative has passed from the Hongkong-Shanghai Bank to the Yokohama Specie Bank. Even Germany, together with Japan and the United States, is ahead of Britain in the Chinese import trade. For Britain the territorial and administrative integrity of China is imperative as a defence for her investments and a guarantee for her trade. Her policy is to play off China against Japan; it is a race between Chinese reconstruction, aided in part by Britain, and Japanese aggression. In these circumstances the conspiracy of silence in the British press about the growing strength of Communism in China is highly significant. It reflects a changed attitude to China—Nanking must be supported. To Britain, therefore, the direction of Chinese policy is a factor of enormous importance.

To fight or not to fight? All political discussion in China begins and ends with the same question. To fight? This would mean chaos or national subjection, at least for the

present, perhaps for a long time to come. China is hopelessly inferior to Japan in military technique and equipment. Not to fight? If Japanese policy be rightly interpreted it means the same thing for China and opens the door to Japanese interference in internal politics and the exploitation by sectional interests of the national dilemma. Furthermore, Nanking must suppress anti-Japanese activities, thereby forfeiting nationalist sentiment and strengthening the moral position of the Communists who are loud in their determination to fight Japan. The Chinese patriot feels like a family friend in a house divided against itself. The fires of Imperialism are burning all around while the inmates continue their private quarrels and the Communist burglar is locked in the attic. According to his temperament he shouts for war or hopes that rival imperialists will extinguish each other in mutual conflict.

The straining of relationships between Nanking and the South is bound up with the internal dilemma and the external conflict. The Hankow-Canton railway, whose rapidly approaching completion helped to bring matters to a head, is financed by British funds. And Kwangsi province, which was the first to strike, has been using Japanese military advisers. To some extent, therefore, the Southern revolt must be regarded as an episode in the larger Anglo-Japanese struggle. The internal situation, however, is more complicated.

The Englishman, who compares China with his own country instead of with Europe, finds it hard to visualize civil war when a foreign power is at the gate. No one could imagine Mr. Lloyd George moving Welsh troops towards the English border, but everyone has become accustomed to the secession of the Irish Free State from the United Kingdom. Indeed, Anglo-Irish relations during the last two or three decades give a homely indication of the perspective of civil war in China. War is always possible, but not probable; relations can reach breaking point even though Irishmen hold prominent positions in London, just as Cantonese fill the ministries in Nanking.

The parallel must not be pressed too far. General Pei Tsung-hsi, the able and ambitious ruler of Kwangsi, is not, like Mr. De Valera, an elected representative of the people. One of the last of the war-lords with any semblance of independence,

his militarization of the provincial government and the people, which has gone to far greater lengths than anywhere else in the country, has made Kwangsi a by-word among foreigners for good government. But his hopeless ideal of economic self-sufficiency naturally involves him in an economic struggle with Nanking for which he is ill equipped. The Hankow-Canton railway, now that it is so near completion, threatens to destroy his strategic position. For this, as well as for economic reasons, he could not wait. He had to strike quickly or not at all. Kwangtung, the Cantonese province, though by no means a good neighbour, is a natural ally against Nanking. Alarmed by the increasing strength of the Central Government, distressed over the loss of bargaining power following the death of Hu Han-min, anticipating that the imminence of a Japanese-created autonomy movement in Fukien would embarrass and absorb the Government, Chen Chi-tang, the Cantonese general, was willing to make capital out of the situation by using his most powerful weapon, political blackmail. In other words, by urging a national campaign against Japan. For this very reason Nanking had to suppress him.

There are few Chinese who misunderstand the situation. But although the policy of Nanking is obvious, that is, to divide Kwangtung and Kwangsi, many are spending sleepless nights, for the fire-eating temperament of Pei Tsung-hsi may lead to a certain amount of fighting and the occasion would be seized by the Japanese for further extensions of their power, probably in Fukien. The situation, indeed, may have further implications. In spite of the cynical exploitation of the student movement in the past by militarists and politicians, new generations of students can still be stirred up by propaganda. It is possible that the fierce anti-Japanese sentiments of Chinese youth may be aroused to such a pitch that the Government will once more be forced to choose between war or the ungracious task of putting out the flames of patriotism. Students have been told for years that they are the leaders of the nation; they have come to believe it.

Europe has yet to see the spectacle of university and public school students lying across the tracks of an important railway until they are provided with free transportation to Geneva to

protest against the inactivity of the League of Nations. No one seriously expects the Oxford Union to go *en masse* to Whitehall and stand for twenty-four hours in the rain waiting for Mr. Eden to explain the foreign policy of his government. Nor do we anticipate that wild-eyed boys from Eton and Harrow will guard the streets of London, searching cars and pedestrians for goods from countries placed under sanctions. Such things happen in China. The student, fired by the spirit of the Gettysburg address, "That government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth," is "saving the nation." Under the influence of a Chinese Gandhi the students and intellectuals of China would be irresistible. Meanwhile they are controlled with a gloved but firm hand.

Last year I asked a student why there had been so few demonstrations during the last few years. Had the students become tired of making history? The answer was that young Garibaldi, not to mention Mazzini, were not encouraged; they tended to disappear. Those who had too lively an interest in political affairs or were not satisfied with the Government, soon found themselves removed from the universities. There were spies everywhere. On the other hand, when student delegates came to Nanking early this year to demand action by the Government against Japan, they were banqueted and entertained to such an extent that they had no heart to press the matter. Not many European Governments would have emerged from such a situation without the loss of a few lives. A group of students from a big national university once called on Mr. Wang Ching-wei to ask him for a more permanent university president. There had been five during the last year, and one of these had almost been lynched. The job was not popular. Mr. Wang invited them into the National Government buildings and talked for an hour about Japan. It was not till the students returned to their rooms that they realized that their demands had not even been considered. It is a wise government that tempers force with paternal cunning.

But why, asks the foreigner, if there is strong anti-Japanese feeling in China, can fifty Japanese soldiers occupy a strategic railway centre, as they did last autumn, without meeting any open opposition? Why is there not a St. Bartholomew's

massacre of Japanese in Shanghai, to say nothing of the interior? These questions go to the roots of the Chinese dilemma; that is, the gap between the educated and the uneducated. The latter, mainly the peasantry, are apparently devoid of any conception of the modern state or national patriotism. This is especially true in the north. The educated patriot, in fact, hardly knows which he hates the more, the swaggering insolence of the Japanese soldiery or the ignorance, impoverishment and lack of national spirit of his own peasantry. The patriot is torn between idealism and reality. Yet the peasant, ignorant and superstitious as he may be, is not from his own point of view an unreasonable man. For centuries he has expected and received little more from government than protection and tax collection, so why, he argues, should he die fighting to prevent the exchange of one tax collector for another? Theirs not to do or die, theirs but to reason why. He can be forgiven a certain sceptical hesitation in following the leadership of those from whom he has never expected a disinterested action.

This is a dangerous aspect of the Chinese dilemma. How can China resist the invader when his progress is not blocked by "embattled farmers," and peasants in uniform have no stomach for the fight? How can the gap between the Government and the peasantry be bridged? There was a time when Nationalist armies were welcomed from village to village, and men, women, and children came out to give refreshments and encouragement to the troops; when girl students fought alongside artisans and farmers, and the crack forces of Mukden were driven steadily northwards beyond Peiping (Peking). One of these girl soldiers, writing from the battlefields, said, "The people who fled at the sight of Y——'s and H——'s troops, come of their own accord to welcome us, as soon as they hear of our arrival. The people are entirely backing us, and, with their help, I have no doubt we shall soon be able to capture these rebel generals, H—— and Y——, and boil them like potatoes." Such was the spirit of the revolution until 1927, when the Kuomintang broke with the Communists and set up a government in Nanking. Whatever the rights and wrongs of this tragic collapse of a united front, the consequences for the peasantry, industrial workers and many students, were disastrous. Peasant unions and labour unions

were dissolved and thousands of young people, especially students, who were suspected of Communism, lost their lives. Borodin, the *fons et origo* of so much revolutionary idealism, left China; the united front of peasants, industrial workers, merchants, officials and soldiers broke up for ever. Those who had made the revolution possible, who believed that they were fighting for a new economic order, to "overthrow," as the girl soldier has it, "the present unfair and wicked economic arrangements," were now no longer necessary to the Kuomintang and could be dispensed with. The only possible bridge between governed and governing, a "New Deal" for the peasant, was shattered. It is not being repaired on any large scale.

A distinguished Chinese put it this way. "China is not yet united on sound foundations. Such unity as we have has come through force. It is not a reflection of any marked improvement in the minds and material conditions of the people." On the contrary, the very real extension of central authority, which many claim to be the first condition of economic reconstruction, has been achieved in the teeth of economic depression and is being secured by reactionary social movements such as the New Life Movement and the revival of Confucianism. The former owes a great deal to German Fascism. "The people must work harder and spend less . . . they must become more military minded." It seeks to revive the ancient virtues of the people, etiquette, justice, integrity, and conscientiousness, for their decay is responsible for the ills of China! Militarization and organization are stressed. It is fundamentally a political measure in the struggle with Communism. Confucianism gives to the Government a further weapon of social control through the heads of families. These movements are the methods by which a paternalistic and authoritarian Government tries to bridge the gap between itself and the people.

This gap is widened by the struggle with Chinese Communists, which in reality dominates Sino-Japanese relationships. A month ago I asked a very prolific Chinese writer on political affairs: "What do you consider to be the first task of Chinese Reconstruction?" "To build up a large army with modern training and equipment." This naturally involves rapid industrialization. "What of the Communists?" "Oh, we can

make some kind of compromise with them." At least he recognized the basic fact that no war could be waged against Japan without either stabilizing the front against the Chinese Soviets or coming to some working arrangement with them.

The point is that a Government engaged in a relentless struggle with considerable sections of its own people cannot resist foreign aggression and leaves itself open to fundamental questions as to its sincerity. The public is gradually losing confidence in the good faith of Nanking, although officialdom is still loyal. A Chinese radical explained the reason for this. "The present government has learned at least one thing. When it has to retrench it does not cut the salaries of its own officials too seriously. Earlier governments were not so wise." It is the non-official groups which are assuming that the ruling classes have more to fear from Communism than from Japan, and that this attitude is partly dictated by those foreign Powers whose influence it was one of the aims of the revolution to eliminate.

It is not easy to keep up a modified position for long. The dilemma and the contradictions in policy that it involves are not difficult to see. To determine the source of sovereignty in China is another matter, and one very germane to the question of resistance. Who rules China? Answers are as varied as informants. A foreigner, of whom I asked the question, replied, "China is ruled by about two thousand returned students." He had not been in the country for long. The thin crust of highly educated officials, more often than not graduates of foreign universities, conceals from the foreigner the realities of the situation. These men have made the reconstruction movement in China indigenous, they are the backbone of nationalism. They staff the banks, the commercial houses, the press, the professions, the Academia Sinica, the government departments and technical positions in public enterprises. They are active in the passing of legislation, the ventilation of China's problems and development of the educational system. Most of them are enthusiastically unhappy about their country. They suffer all the consequences of responsibility without power: they reign but do not rule.

Who rules? Chinese sometimes refer to the "Sung Dynasty," meaning the three Sung sisters, their brother T. V. Soong, and their husbands, Chiang Kai-shek, Dr. H. H. Kung (Minister

of Finance), and the late Dr. Sun Yat-sen. Ask a man from the villages, he will say—the landlords; a scholar dismisses the question with—the military; a merchant suggests—the Banks; officials point to the Kuomintang. All are right in varying degrees. The truth appears to be that Chiang Kai-shek, that is, the Army, holds the chair. He decides all-important questions of policy.

It is easy to over-emphasize the power of the army. The cynic points out that during the Wang-Chiang regime civil officials went up and down the Yangtse river like shuttle-cocks. Military headquarters at that time were up at Kuling. This is true, but the army is not an irresponsible force; it is limited by powerful interests on which it is in large measure dependent. It must respect the advice of bankers and build up a sound currency, guarantee security for investments, restore foreign credit and encourage industrialization. On the other hand, it cannot afford to offend the landlords and gentry in the rural areas, for they finance the peasant and control the collection of land taxes on which provincial armies depend. It is also necessary to control the Kuomintang, a vested interest in itself, and pay lip homage to Sun Yat-sen, whose name is still essential to the legitimacy of any regime. If Chiang Kai-shek's eight crack divisions, on which the authority of the Central Government ultimately depends, are smashed in a war with Japan, what will happen to him, to Nanking officialdom, and the unity of China? The case for peace is strong. Japan is obviously taking advantage of that fact.

Last year a group of Chinese intellectuals from various walks of life met to discuss the situation in the north. I attended many of their discussions. Those who were in favour of fighting immediately, to the last man, hoped that a prolonged struggle would involve Japan in social disturbances at home. They sent a telegram to their government asking it to declare war. This was a minority action, but the whole group was for resistance of some kind. The question to decide was at what point active resistance should begin. What were the real Japanese aims? Were they inimical to the development of China as a nation or could a vigorous Chinese diplomacy meet the Japanese half way and settle outstanding questions in a friendly spirit? It was felt

that the hydra-headed and heavy-booted policies of Japan did not admit of negotiation. With whom could one deal? The Foreign Office, the General Staff, the Kwantung Army (in Manchukuo) or the junior officers? More might be gained by playing off one against the other, for none could be trusted, than by declaring war and so uniting a divided nation. To fight would be to play the game of the promotion-hungry, swaggering young samurais of the Kwantung Army. Responsible opinion is generally agreed that resistance by force of arms is out of the question except as a last desperate resort.

The chief concern of intelligent Chinese is not so much the question of fighting in the present as in the future. To say "The Yellow River and not another inch" is to misunderstand the nature of Japanese policy. Japanese aggression must rather be measured in terms of diplomatic commitments, political pressure, interference in the development of Chinese industry and commerce and intervention in Chinese internal administration. And the chief enemy in this matter, at least for the public, is the facts.

The crux of the situation comes down to the question: If China does not fight now, will she ever be able to fight? There is only one way in which Chinese public opinion can be satisfied on this point. It must be assured that a central core, a nucleus of five or six provinces, is being built up from which China can ultimately expand to her full stature. Certain Chinese writers suggest that this nucleus should be constructed in the interior, that industry should be developed away from the vulnerable coastal provinces. It is as if someone were to suggest moving London to the Hebrides to avoid air attack. Meanwhile the only practical "Prussia" for China is in the Yangtse valley. This must be kept free for development whatever happens in the north or south.

If this is the pattern of Chinese policy there are three ways in which Japan can be resisted. China can, in the first place, refuse to fight—a policy consistently followed except for the brief struggle over Jehol. The defence of Shanghai by the 19th Route Army was not authorized by Nanking. Secondly, she can refuse to sign away her territorial and administrative rights however much they may be invaded in practice. In this

respect the Tangku truce appears to be a serious commitment, although China can afford to give away in the northern provinces what could not be surrendered in the central. Lastly, she can continue to "play off one barbarian against another." In particular she may be able to exploit the growing Anglo-Japanese antagonisms of policy and interest on the Asiatic mainland.

The dilemma of China is resulting in two opposing tendencies. The Government is turning for inspiration to German Fascism, the people to the U.S.S.R., and the Chinese Soviets. Only certain officials talk politely about the League of Nations. In Nanking, last summer, I saw a Russian film at the end of which were shown some impressive May Day parades in Moscow. The solid phalanxes of white-clad youths moved across the Red Square. The audience clapped and shouted its approval. The might of Russia is seen as a threat to Japan ; many Chinese still hope for a Russo-Japanese war in which the Island Empire would be crushed. This prospect is not so pleasing to a government which could not expect to survive whichever side won, for to support Japan would outrage public opinion and invite Russian help for the Chinese Communists. Neutrality, the only way out, could not be maintained without Anglo-American support. China's rulers turn to Fascism, to militarization and "national revival" through the authoritarian state, to a stern and uncompromising suppression of all opposition, particularly of Communism. Meanwhile, although the internal situation in China will continue to get worse, there is no immediate danger of a Sino-Japanese war. China, with British encouragement and indirect assistance, will keep up a limited resistance and watch with great attention the outcome of those Anglo-Japanese rivalries which now dominate international relations in the Far East.

CUT OUT THE STARS

BY JAN STRUTHER

“**T**O glaze it the same again,” said Mr. Cotterson, “’ll cost you a guinea.”

“A guinea?”

“Yes. You see, it’s one of them old-fashioned ones. This here black border’s all painted on the glass from the inside, and them gold stars is done in leaf.”

I groaned. It is a commonplace of domestic life that just when one has made up one’s mind that for a year at least one must buy nothing but necessities, a nail slips out of the wall and sends a picture crashing to the ground. To let a valuable engraving be ruined by dust for the sake of a new glass is obviously bad economy. It is true that one might wrap it up for a year in a dust-proof parcel: but for one thing, no parcels are dust-proof in London, and for another, there is an oblong mark on the wall which would put off prospective tenants. So I took it round to Cotterson’s, prepared to spend, reluctantly, a few shillings.

“How much would a plain glass be?”

“Plain glass woan do,” said Mr. Cotterson. “That’d need a mount, plain glass would. And I carn do this black and gold affair for lessan a guinea.”

There was a silence.

“Of course,” added Mr. Cotterson thoughtfully, “if you cut out the stars, that’d ony come fifteen shillings. There’s a lot of work in them stars.”

I jumped at this rebate, though even fifteen shillings seemed an appalling sum.

“All right,” I said. “Cut out the stars.” And as I walked away down the King’s Road I knew that, quite by chance, I had hit upon a slogan.

Now a slogan is a very great help. The belligerent clans of

the Gael knew this many centuries ago—though they, with their genius for wasting letters, wrote it *sluagh-gairm*. “*Chlanna nan con thigibh a so’s gheibh sibh feoil!*” yelled (no easy matter) the Camerons of Lochiel as they charged down the brae with drawn claymores; and their opponents—who gathered, astutely enough, that this meant “Sons of the hounds, come here and get flesh!”—shook in their brogans. Of late years the principle has been rediscovered by those indefatigable campaigners, the advertising agents. “Eat More Tripe!” they bellow at us from every hoarding, or scrawl in letters of smoke across the impartial serenity of the sky; and before long the whole country has become tripe-conscious, and smart women sit round the fire, after dinner and before the men come up, discussing the rival merits of monk’s-hood and honeycomb. If a slogan can work such magic, it is clearly worth having one. “Cut Out the Stars. . . .” It is a poem in itself, apart from its esoteric significance.

The well-known axiom, usually applied to alcohol and tobacco, that it is easier to do without than to do with less, is equally true of expenditure. Not that one can ever become a total abstainer from spending: one’s landlord on quarter-day would remain coldly unmoved by a letter saying that one had signed the pledge. But to some temperaments it is less irksome to buy no extras at all than to have the intolerable strain of deciding, every time the instinct to buy a non-necessity crops up, whether one can afford it or not. This attitude, by the way, often earns its possessors a reputation for self-denial which they do not wholly deserve: there is much in it also of indolence, of hedonism, of a desire to save not money, but time and trouble. But it has this advantage, that with its aid one more quickly gets back on to that rung in the financial ladder at which one need no longer cut out the stars. One may even, if one keeps it up long enough, reach that still higher rung which is known in one family at any rate as being on the Amber Duck Standard.

This expression was minted many years ago when we, during some previous and now-forgotten financial crisis, happened to go to dinner with a charming, kindly, and hospitable old bachelor of whom we were very fond. On his chaste Adam chimney-piece, flanking the graceful ormolu clock which had been there

ever since we had known him, we caught sight of a new treasure—a pair of Chinese ducks, nearly half life-size, carved out of clear amber. They were rich in duck-like characteristics: they had the practical fussiness, the bland innocence, the complacent humour, all the inward and outward *curliness* of duckhood. Facing each other, they floated motionless on their little ebony pools, miracles of plump translucency. They were delicious.

“Oh!” we exclaimed with one voice.

“Yes,” said our host, beaming. “Aren’t they nice? I got them at ——’s this afternoon.”

The name he mentioned was that of the most expensive dealer in St. James’s, but that was beside the point: what struck us, filling us with a mixture of envy, amusement, and awe, was how wonderful it must feel to be in the market not only for bread and circuses, but for chimney-piece ornaments as well.

Ornaments, as a rule, are things one does not buy. One inherits them, one receives them as wedding or Christmas presents, one wins them at a hoop-la stall. For it must be borne in mind that there is no difference whatever between a pink china boot and a Dresden shepherdess: both, technically, are amber ducks. I have, before now, heard the expression on other people’s lips, misused, and known the vexation of a carpenter who sees one of his own chisels being employed as a screw-driver. I have heard it applied to such things as plays, films and concerts, which is entirely wrong: these things are circuses, not amber ducks. Books, pictures, and gramophone records, too, are exempt, for some reason vaguely, perhaps snobbishly, connected with uplift: though to buy a limited edition, vellum-bound, of a book which is obtainable in ordinary form, is getting nearer the mark. Even this, however, the purist would reject. For a book, however grandly got up, can still be read: whereas with an amber duck, strictly speaking, there should be no possibility of doing anything at all except look at it. The term may be stretched, however, to include usable objects which you do not in fact intend to use, such as snuff-boxes, *étuis*, vinaigrettes, lacquer fans, damascened daggers, unwashable milk jugs in the shape of cows, and all bowls, jars, dishes, plates, and glasses which are considered too valuable to contain flowers, food, or wine.

Let it not be thought that I am in any way denigrating amber ducks. Far from it. They are, for me, a symbol of prosperity : to be in a position to buy them (and their price varies from two-pence at the Caledonian Market to a hundred guineas in King Street, according to the buyer's standard of living) is to be a wealthy man. They are more than cake, more even than sugar icing ; they are the paper frill round it and the little silver balls on the top. They are decorative and idle and unjustifiable and lovably absurd—the aristocracy of the world of inanimate objects.

And like other idle aristocracies they are the first thing to be thrown overboard in a crisis. As a virtuous bride, from her wedding day onward, keeps her heart so closed to temptation that her eyes are blind, her ears deaf, to the flying banners and sounding trumpets of adventure, so, when one embraces a regime of economy, one ceases even to be aware of the existence of amber ducks. (Not just at first ; but after a while a merciful numbness sets in.) And as, to one who is in the mood for adventure, there is no lack of it to be found, so, directly the necessity for economy is over, one's range of vision automatically widens. One becomes conscious, and lustfully conscious, of the green glass egg in the corner shop which one has walked past, unseeing, every day for months : in no time at all one is strolling in and asking the price.

But that day is a long way off. In the meanwhile one has still to climb back somehow on to the rung below—the rung called Legitimate Replacements. In the meanwhile one must still, with drawn claymore, cut out the stars.

PUBLISHERS AND SINNERS

A Retrospect

BY ARTHUR WAUGH

EVERY lifetime has its milestones; and most of them, however significant to the individual, have no sort of interest to the world at large. They are best remembered and regretted in silence. For example, the fact that in my own life the month of August, 1936, sees the completion of my seventieth year ("the allotted span of the Psalmist") concerns nobody outside the small circle of my family, and even them very little: a lifetime mainly devoted to fostering the children of other people's brains has enjoyed scant liberty or leisure to make provision for its own. But, looking back over my experiences as a publisher, I was aroused the other day by the fanfare of publicity which acclaimed the gathering of a Congress of Publishers in London, and reminded any lingerer who cared to listen that thirty-five years had passed since such a meeting had taken place under the shadow of St. Paul's—thirty-five years—just half the seventy I am now bringing to a close! And I could not help remembering that thirty-five years ago I myself had taken a small part in the proceedings: had read a paper to the Congress; and had heard its arguments discussed by better and more successful men than myself, almost all of them now vanished from the scene of their labours.

How keen we were in those days! How eager and hopeful! There was so much to do that somehow has never got itself done. The old problems return, still unsolved, and further complicated by changed manners, customs, rivalries, and abuses. "Old men forget": but they remember also. They remember, and compare. It seemed to me just possible that there might be a space of public interest in a short retrospect or survey of the changes that have come over the publishing world in the interval of nearly fifty years, since I began living in the world of

books and bookmen—a survey mainly commercial and social; for the publisher, we are continually being told, knows very little about literature, and (perhaps) not very much about commerce. At any rate, the two milestones, standing side by side, set my memory to work; and here, in short, are a few reflections, for the benefit of such as have the time to hear.

“Publishers and Sinners!” It was Henry W. Nevinson who first called us that, in a memorable speech, made to his contributors and friends, when, to the regret of all true lovers of literary journalism, he retired from his editorship of the Book Page of the *Daily Chronicle*. And “sinners,” no doubt, we shall always be in the eyes of the general public; for there is no branch of commercial activity so freely, and often (I may add) so erratically, criticized by those who, as a matter of fact, know nothing whatever about it all. Because books are, so to speak, common property, all the world thinks itself qualified to dogmatize over their fortunes. Take this recent Congress, for instance; the Press has given it an astonishing amount of patronage. If the licensed victuallers had held a jamboree, or the worthy society of “charcutiers” had met to discuss sausages and tripe, what reporter, however short of material, would have troubled to make “copy” of their deliberations? But, when the publishers (and sinners) meet in conclave, and problems of copyright and translation, broadcasting and distribution are in the air, the Press displays a highly complimentary curiosity over the secrets of the counting-house—a very much livelier curiosity than it displayed five-and-thirty years ago. For in the interval books have become “news”; the Press has taken over the dictatorship of the book-trade; and the Press is out to teach us all our business. That is one of the most vital changes I have witnessed in my time as a publisher; and I cannot pretend to believe that it is very helpful to literature.

Books have become “news.” Let us consider for a moment just what this means. It means that today books are reviewed, discussed, and marketed, more and more exclusively from the standpoint of journalistic “copy” and newspaper “stunt.” There is a current expression which pervades every corner of the daily paper—I mean the word “story.” You are confronted with the portrait of a goggle-eyed infant, bearing some such

inviting legend as "Little Polly, the champion child skipping-roper"; and underneath, in staring italics, "Story on Page 5." Every paragraph must tell its "story"; every book must have its "sensation"; and, for the better spreading abroad of "story" and "sensation," every newspaper must have its own tribunal, selecting its own "Book of the Month," on the same basis of excitement, competition, and glittering award. Just as a cricket test-team is chosen over and over again by amateur judges, long before the selectors at Lord's have started their deliberations, so these judges of the Press must proclaim their standards of literature, which (to give them due credit) they do with such bursting vitality that the public cannot choose but be impressed. And, as a publisher, I must make free confession. I am pleased enough when one of our books is the pressman's choice; for I know that *that* book at any rate will soon be run after at the libraries. At the same time, I cannot escape the certainty that the run upon that *one* book will be bad for all the other books in our season's list. And what is true of the individual list, is true of the whole trade. The library public is a jostling flock of sheep, following the bell-wether hither and thither, pell-mell. And it is the library public and not the book-buyer who keeps the book-trade still alive.

The influence of the circulating library is paramount today. That is the second of the great changes of the last five-and-thirty years. The old-fashioned book-buyer is a dwindling class in England; and his defection is a sad loss to literature. Many causes have contributed to his decay. There is, first and foremost, the housing question. The English home has become a restless caravan, and the tenant of Mr. Lewis Baumer's "latest model of bed-sit-kitch flatlet" has simply no shelves upon which to store a private library. Here today, and gone tomorrow, he (or she) travels as lightly laden as possible: chairs and tables, pots and pans—these things needs must be, but books!—so long as you can borrow them by the week, who wants them collecting dust in odd corners? So the circulating libraries flourish; rival programmes vie with one another in cheapness; until at last you can borrow all you need to amuse you for twopence a week, which is much cheaper than a week's issues of the newspaper which tells you what to borrow.

The book-borrowing habit has grown enormously in the last twenty or thirty years ; and the number of potential readers now includes every class of the community. There was a time when the libraries chiefly catered for country houses and parsonages, and "Mudie's box" was eagerly expected by stay-at-home spinsters in rural districts, where Miss Braddon was regarded as "rather bold," Rhoda Broughton as "distinctly dangerous," and Ouida as "dreadfully naughty, but very exciting." These books were for the parlour ; in the kitchen the "Bow-Bells novelettes" fanned the imagination of parlour-maids and page-boys ; but the vast army of working girls, in shops and factories, read very little at all, except perhaps *The Police News*. Today, there are book-borrowing facilities in every village, and subscriptions "to suit every purse." The twopenny subscription, in particular, has revolutionized popular reading. Gaze around you in the omnibus and the tube railway, and you will see that nearly every passenger has a book. Look over the reader's shoulders, if you can snatch a chance, and you will be surprised to see that 75 per cent. of the books bear titles you have never heard of. There must be a vast hive of subterranean activity supplying this daily demand ; and the result, it would seem, must surely be all to the advantage of publishers and authors ?

Well, of course, it is good in its way ; but it complicates the publisher's problems most intricately. It complicates both the choice of the volumes, and the cost of production ; for cheap subscriptions mean cheap readers ; and both taste and terms have to be adjusted to the situation. The "twopenny library" is chiefly fed by the half-crown novel ; and the half-crown novel is generally a reprint of a book which has already succeeded at seven-and-sixpence. But the "twopenny" client is not too easily put off with an old book or an unknown name. She has heard some popular success discussed at the dinner-table, and she sees no reason why she should be kept waiting for her turn to read it. So the life of the original edition grows shorter and shorter ; the more "select" libraries have scarcely had time to reduce the prices of their "slightly soiled copies," when a brand-new reprint, scarcely distinguishable in type and format from the original seven-and-sixpenny edition, is on the market, so

that the unsold stock becomes unsaleable, except at a break-up price. How many books can stand this rush of competition? Which of his partial successes is the publisher to choose for this second blooming; and how many will bloom again? And how will the authors of the books not chosen be satisfied by excuses and explanations? If they are not satisfied, they are more than likely to transfer their loyalties to a rival house. So the publisher's list keeps on changing; the market is in a perpetual state of unrest; certainly more books are read, but at a much greater expenditure of nerve and capital. And the profit accruing to the balance-sheet is seldom proportionate to the energy demanded. In short, the publisher has to think, and work, at least twice as hard as he did forty years ago.

He has to think and work also in the teeth of continually increasing competition. "There are too many publishers," says the half-witted woman at the cocktail party, "and too many books." As a matter of fact, there are neither. Compared with the number of people employed in almost any other form of industry, the regiment of publishers is very small indeed; and there are simply not enough books to go round. The general standard of literature improves from year to year. I myself have been reading manuscripts for more than 45 years, and I never knew a time when so many respectable productions kept flowing in from all over the country. But the improvement is a question of average, not of outstanding brilliancy. The age of giants is no more. And the curious paradox of the present day is the fact that, at a time when the word "story" is bandied about with such wearisome prodigality, it is precisely the gift of story-telling which our aspiring writers seem to lack. Directly a really good story appears, it runs like wildfire through the country. But how many really good stories are published in a year? Not fifty; perhaps not twenty. There is a constant demand for tales of crime and mystery; but what a poor show most of them make! They are jig-saw puzzles, without character or real drama. Match them against the mysteries of Wilkie Collins, or even of Sheridan Le Fanu, and they go down, and are counted out in the first round. It is an old article of my own publisher's creed that, if a new Wilkie Collins were to appear today he would sweep the board. But we ransack our manu-

scripts in a vain search for such gifts ; the art is dead and done for.

There is another fatuous argument of the amateur critic. "Books," she declares, "are too dear. If they were cheaper, they would be bought in millions." Believe it not, receive it not, oh budding publisher ; or you will burn your fingers to the bone. No scheme will ever succeed which is based upon the conviction that there is a public itching to *buy* new books, if only they are offered at popular prices. The foreshore of my own memory is strewn with the wreckage of such deceptive dreams. Twenty-five years ago it was my fate to be chairman at a dinner of the book-trade, in the week when an enterprising and hopeful firm had just launched a new series of full-length *new* novels, published at two shillings apiece. All the speeches of the evening turned upon this glittering adventure. Wiseacres, who ought to have known better, prophesied an immediate revolution in trade methods. Those were the days of the six-shilling novel. This new experiment, we were assured, would kill the six-shilling novel. No book would ever be published at a higher price than two shillings—"ever any more."

Chaos was come again. There were a few of us (I may indulge Her Highness my Vanity by remembering) who refused to be convinced. "Wait and see," we said. In a very few months the new series ceased to serialise. The publishers had paid their authors in advance on the assumption that, at a third of the old price, at least three times as many copies would be sold. The dream was a delusion. Money was lost freely ; the old price was re-established. The same experience has been repeated again and again. It culminated in a gallantly-acclaimed attempt to swamp the market with a deluge of brand-new novels in neat, attractive ninepenny volumes. There was an inaugural luncheon, whereat Deans dogmatized and Cabinet Ministers prophesied smooth things. For a few weeks all was "gas and gaiters" ; then the gas evaporated, and the gaiters took their flight. The old business of borrowing at the library counter was resumed. So it always will be resumed, until a New Dispensation converts the borrower into the buyer once more.

But by this time I seem to hear the reader's voice raised in reasonable protest. "I have been patient long enough," he

interrupts ; “ but there are two things I should like to remark. First, in spite of all you say, books *are* bought all over the country ; look at the bookshops—the really good bookshops—in every town. Second, you have been talking all the time as though every book were a novel. Let me remind you that there are such things as biographies, histories, travel-books, and works of philosophy and religion—much more important literature than the novel.” Yes, indeed ; there are also primers, grammars, atlases, and treatises on campanology and hydrostatics ; and all these are worth more than many novels in the service of mental progress.

But I have let my argument run riot over the field of fiction because it is the novel that the vast new public first pursues, and because the novelist is the outstanding figure in the book-market, the centre of competition, the quarry of the hunter. A public character may write his reminiscences *once*, and even find a backer to pay him £20,000 for his “ story ” ; if he be a politician, with “ war memories,” and a case to plead, he may continue the recital through several volumes, and lay up a small fortune from the hospitalities of Fleet Street. But it is the novelist who chiefly makes a whole-time profession of writing ; whose praises fill the columns of the Sunday papers, now in the shape of reviews and now in the form of glowing advertisements which might almost be written by the same hands ; it is the novelist over whom the contending publishers struggle even to the death. The novelist makes the money of the book-trade, alike for himself and his publisher, and he makes it, not by the copies that are sold, but by the copies that are borrowed.

“ Then how about the bookshops ? ” retorts my critic. Well, sir, have you ever taken stock of a prosperous country “ bookseller’s ” ? Have you considered what proportion of his goods are books, and in particular *new books* ? Have you considered those glass-cases full of writing materials, inkpots, stylographic pens, leather reticules, purses, and even cigarette-boxes ? Have you noticed how the customer gravitates towards those revolving screens of picture postcards ? And have you stepped upstairs, and mingled with the throng bustling round the courteous but over-worked manageress of the circulating library department ? When you have done all this, and con-

trasted the sum of these activities with the languid demand at that centre-table of "New Books On Sale" in the front-shop, we will talk together about the prosperity of the country bookseller; and I believe we shall find many points of agreement. "No," said a well-dressed woman to the representative in charge of our own stall at last year's Christmas Book Exhibition, "I never pay more than half-a-crown for a book. That is my limit." Then she dropped her voice. "Unless you have something really spicy at three-and-six?" She went away, grasping with a hand of ice a book whose wrapper revealed a girl of lively physical attractions, prettily bare under a loose peignoir, and about to open a bathroom door. As it happened, she had chosen a book of high distinction, *The Pilgrim of a Smile*, by Norman Davey; but she had chosen it with other expectations. In this particular case she was not likely to be disappointed. But that was a freak of fortune. Meanwhile—"I never pay more than half-a-crown for a book" will remain the common precept of the book-buyer; and with so many desirable reprints to choose from—not forgetting the really wonderful "Penguins," a model of taste and judgment—there is no reason why anybody ever should. Yet the author cannot live upon the proceeds of a reprint. He must still look to the libraries for the backbone of his livelihood.

So we have arrived, I hope, at some sort of outline of the changes and chances of modern publishing; and, if the retrospect and prospect seem rather grey, they are not really meant to be. I have dealt in generalities, and I know well enough that there are plenty of examples on the brighter side. Hidden in quiet corners all over the country, there are still loyal bookmen and women (even women!) of the old order, who buy and cherish a good book when they hear of it; the enormous success of such a pure piece of literature as *The Story of San Michele* is proof enough of that, and to spare. The good thing still makes its way, but it has freakish difficulties to overcome. I see the modern publisher like a motorist in a block of traffic, with a narrow bottle-neck to negotiate. Beyond him, on the other side, is the public, ready to welcome him if he can get through; but immediately ahead of him is the strait defile of the circulating library, with the librarian checking his advance, and exacting

toll for his passage. And all around him is the inexorable crowd of his colleagues and rivals, cutting in, trumpeting, driving him to the kerb ; if there is a collision now and again, what wonder ? For indeed they drive like Jehu, the son of Nimshi, and are no respecters of mud-guards and wind-screens. Am I over-sensitive if I believe that the traffic was not always so uproarious ; that the road has lost something of its honourable amenities ? Half the publisher's troubles, it seems to me, are brewed in the house of those who should be his friends. Congresses meet, international congresses, bubbling over with protestations of good will ; but when the captains and the kings depart, there is the same old thunder on the hills. The guns are in position ; the League of Nations is impotent ; where is the boasted " collective security " of the scattered conference ? After all, authors, publishers, and booksellers are bound, or should be bound, by the closest ties of mutual interest. We did not always steal one another's authors, or imitate one another's advertisements, or start, week in, week out, a rival cheap series exactly like our next door neighbour's. If publishers were always sinners, sealed of the tribe of Barabbas, at least there was honour among thieves. I wish there were a little more today. I wish we could foster together the things that belong unto our peace.

But then I am an old man ; and this month sees my seventieth birthday. Other times, I suppose, other manners. And the trade, the business, the profession of publishing (call it what you will) remains, and will remain, in spite of all its self-made hindrances, one of the most fascinating in the world. Like Gordon's sick stock-rider, " I would live the same life over, if I had to live again " ; and, take it all round, I would try to live it on the same lines, under whatever changed conditions. I can even bring myself to envy the youngest beginner, who has his own new standards to plant upon the outward walls which we shall soon desert. I can envy him, and I wish him luck. And, when he, too, attains his three-score years and ten, may he have as many sunlit milestones to look back upon, and count himself happy in the indulgence of as many kindly friends !

THE TROUBLES OF POLAND

BY GEORGE SOLOVEYITCHIK

A VISIT to Poland or any attempt to understand her present position is meaningless unless one tries to see that country against its historical background. And it is difficult, even after the briefest acquaintance with Polish history, not to feel a very deep sympathy with Poland. Seldom has a nation had a more tragic past, seldom is a state so heavily handicapped by its historical inheritance as the present young Polish Republic.

Centuries of foreign invasion by every possible kind of foe : Tartars, Turks, and Teutons (the famous Teutonic Knights, a branch of that international nuisance of the middle ages, the Crusaders, who did more killing and plundering than baptizing) ; then Russians, Swedes, Prussians, and finally dismemberment, which for a century did away with the Polish State altogether. The Napoleonic wars, a series of unsuccessful and ruthlessly repressed rebellions, the great war, and, almost immediately after independence had been regained, a war with the Soviets. Is it not extraordinary that the Poles have survived all this and have emerged from such ordeals with a spirit undaunted and with the cultural achievements of which they are so justly proud ?

The war, which gave Poland her independence and a reunion of the three dismembered parts, also left her a completely ruined country. How Pilsudski formed the first Polish legions, actually at the very outset of the war in August, 1914 ; how, after a series of trials and adventures, he lived to see the proclamation of a " free and independent Poland " as a condition of peace ; how he became the first head of the newly born State, then its military and eventually its political saviour—all this is well known and can be found in any text book.

What is less known is the extent to which Poland had been bled dry both by the Russians and the Germans between 1914 and 1918, how she started her national existence with nothing

but millions of paupers, and the way in which she owed her first steps towards recovery to the American Relief Committee under Herbert Hoover.

I am mentioning all this because without it present-day Poland, more than sixteen years removed from these happenings which appear both so recent and yet so far away, cannot be judged in its proper light. When I revisited that country some weeks ago, I could not help thinking, bearing in mind Poland's past, of the famous Johnsonian remark about the dog walking on its hind legs, that the strange thing is not that it is doing it badly but that it can do it at all.

Poland's industrial development has proceeded under the influence of two most unfavourable factors, viz., a large annual increase of the population and acute lack of capital. This increase amounts to the fantastic figure of 500,000 souls a year, Poland having the highest birth-rate in Europe. As a result of this superabundance of labour and scarcity of capital, an unhealthy disequilibrium has arisen with what is known as "cottage industry" (i.e., artisans working in their own homes) on the one side, and a number of gigantic industrial enterprises—created or controlled by foreign capital—on the other. It is one of the fundamental weaknesses of Poland's economic structure, and although only 10 per cent. of the population are employed in industry, the country as a whole greatly suffers from it.

Nearly three-quarters of the population live by agriculture, and here, too, the position is most precarious. That they are adversely affected by the unfavourable world trend from which all agricultural countries suffer today goes without saying. But they have no accumulated resources to draw upon, and the poverty of the Polish peasant today surpasses all imagining. Yet that peasant has great and sterling qualities. He is hard working, moral, and strong; he has an innate sense of pride, almost nobility, yet he is singularly humble and courteous. He is also profoundly religious. One can feel to the present day the breath of Rome and the French monks who brought Latin Christianity to the Poles nearly a thousand years ago, and there is nothing more fascinating to observe than the strange blend of Western and Oriental influences among such a fundamentally Slav race.

That is another point to bear in mind when trying to understand present-day Poland. Its people have all the typical virtues and faults of the Slavs. They are emotional and highly artistic. Their very demeanour and looks and costumes reveal that, and it is enough to mention their music and literature, their peasant arts and crafts, or their painting and architecture, to indicate some of the most striking outward manifestations of the race. As to their spiritual quality, only those who have lived among a Slav people can fully appreciate it, and I shall not attempt here a description or an analysis of *l'âme slave*. Suffice it to say that it is that mental or spiritual quality of the Slav which enables him to put up with suffering and sacrifice and self-denial to an extent that is quite beyond the Latin or Anglo-Saxon races. All this, moreover, without the spirit being in any way broken or affected. This detachment or indifference to material well-being is one of the features that make the Pole so interesting and so attractive. But the failings of the typical Slav are equally prevalent in him : lack of precision and the exasperating absence of any notion of time ; love of meditation and introspection, of abstract mental speculation ; individualism carried to such extremes that it makes teamwork almost impossible ; or again a hopeless lack of political intuition and discipline.

It was out of this kind of human material that Marshal Pilsudski attempted to make a united nation. The difficulties will be further appreciated when the profound heterogeneousness of the population is taken into account. To begin with, there are some considerable national minorities in present day Poland. Only 69 per cent. of the people are actually Poles. Ukrainians constitute 15 per cent., Jews 8.5 per cent., and White Russians nearly 5 per cent. of the population. There are also German, Czech, Lithuanians, and purely Russian elements. These national minorities offer great problems, and although the Poles are by nature tolerant, the present economic, religious, and racial antagonisms of other countries have contaminated them as well. More of this later. More than a century of Russian, German, and Austrian domination has stamped each part of the former and now re-united Polish state with specific local characteristics. In education, standard of life, occupation, environment, the people in these three different parts of Poland are unlike each

other, or perhaps it is more correct to say that despite certain fundamental characteristics that they have in common they have each developed on their own lines. One need only reflect on the vast difference between, say, military service in the Russian and the German armies, or between a Russian and a German school or university to realize the full significance of this. It is no mere coincidence that one of the first tasks of the new Polish state was to establish a system of national training and education tending to produce a more homogeneous type of Pole. Indeed one of the first acts of independent Poland was to introduce compulsory and free education in elementary schools. Much has also been done as regards national health and social welfare, while surprisingly great strides in games, sport and every other kind of physical exercise must also be recorded. The youth of the nation is genuinely enthusiastic about all outdoor games and very proficient in them. Nothing is more striking in that respect than the difference between the young and the older generations in Poland today.

Many other examples of progress and achievement could be found, in fact they could be multiplied almost *ad infinitum*—in the growth and development of the city of Warsaw, for instance, where next to the beautiful old palaces and churches, real gems of baroque architecture, you find imposing new modern buildings and squares and monuments, some of them the work of that great Polish architect Lalewicz, who formerly contributed much to the embellishment of Petrograd. I might mention in parenthesis that with the unerring Anglo-Saxon instinct for building the wrong thing in the wrong place (think of English and American churches in France or Italy, for example) an English assurance company has seen fit to put up an idiotic skyscraper in a small old square. One must be grateful that the unique “Old Market Place,” which looks today exactly as it did 400 years ago, has so far escaped such disfigurement. Another mercy is that the Germans, when they were driven out of Warsaw at the end of the war overlooked a lovely old pub that has been in this square from time immemorial. The mere mention of the word “pub” prompts me to say that the restaurants, and especially the cafés, of Warsaw are very good indeed, their main fault, however, being that food is too rich.

As to theatres, concerts and other artistic entertainments, Poland has always stood in the front rank of European nations. To divert the Poles' interest from other issues, the old Russian authorities encouraged and even subsidized the arts, and there is little doubt that in this as in certain other matters Poland's capital owes her former oppressors a genuine debt of gratitude. Apart from Warsaw, there are also fantastic art treasures in some of the old cities like Cracow or Torun or Lwow, whose architecture is unique; and there is much of interest in the smaller places and even in the villages, not to speak of the grand manorial houses of the old nobility.

And yet, despite all that has been achieved, Poland today is in a thoroughly bad way. Her difficulties are both of a political and an economic order, the situation of late having taken a more than usually acute turn. Nothing demonstrates this clearer than the Cabinet reconstruction which took place on May 15th, when General Felician Slawoj-Skladkowski became Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior. In other words, the attempt to initiate a more liberal form of government, which apparently the rulers of present day Poland had hoped to achieve, has failed, and now the army is taking charge.

It must be realized that up to May, 1926, when Pilsudski made his coup, parliamentary democracy had failed to give Poland a responsible and stable government. For the nine years that followed, the Marshal ruled the country as a dictator, yet it was his personality rather than any application of force that lent him power and authority. He never lost touch with the masses, never destroyed Parliament, and never over-estimated the chances of a military dictatorship in Poland. Unfortunately, however, he concentrated his attention almost entirely on two issues: national defence and foreign policy, leaving internal political matters as well as social and economic affairs to look after themselves. His authority was so great that on the strength of it alone the Polish nation could be kept together, internal struggles avoided and the business of government successfully transacted.

Marshal Pilsudski's death just over a year ago left a political as well as a personal vacuum which is becoming daily more apparent. Pilsudski had been the system. When he disappeared

there was nothing left except a number of rival politicians, all of whom had at various times held office under him, and all of whom are therefore "Pilsudchiki" as they are called. But apart from their loyalty to the late chief and the rival claims to his spiritual inheritance, little or nothing can be found that these people have in common. Some of them are actually at loggerheads with one another, and this after so many years of subordination to one dominating outside will is only natural. Then there is the army, with a titular successor in the position of Inspector-General, General Rydz-Smigly. But until the recent crisis he seemed anxious to avoid all political action, and, of course, he does not and cannot enjoy the late Marshal's authority. To carry on a dictatorship without a dictator would be difficult enough under any circumstances.

Enough has been said, I think, to show why the problem of Poland is well-nigh hopeless. And the fundamental economic weakness of the country, worsened as it is by crisis conditions, has made the situation even more complicated. Social unrest, fostered by real hardship and exploited by party propaganda, is growing daily. There has been trouble with the unemployed; there is trouble over the Jews. The Nationalists (or Right opposition of the present regime) are conducting a violent anti-Semitic campaign, and have succeeded in upsetting the reasonably satisfactory old order when Poles and Jews lived quite happily side by side in their mutual contempt for each other. The Poles despised the Jews because they did not work on the land, while the Jews despised the Poles for their incompetence in commerce and money matters; but having once accepted this state of affairs as normal, both sides showed themselves anxious for very friendly collaboration. Marshal Pilsudski's tolerant and friendly treatment of the Jews even earned him a certain amount of adverse criticism among the Polish diehards, who accused him of having sold himself. But not until recent times did the spread of wild anti-Semitism become an important issue in the political life of the country, and the Nationalists today represent roughly one-third of the population.

On the other side of the barricade is the Left opposition, also representing about one-third of the population and consisting of peasants, workers, and Radical or Socialist intellectuals. It was

with this Left opposition that the " Liberal Pilsudchik " Zyndram Koscialkowski, the present Premier's predecessor in office, was supposed to have sought an understanding or some sort of working arrangement similar to the one made with the Ukrainians. Had he succeeded with their support in restoring public confidence and carrying through the necessary social and economic reforms, perhaps the present strained position could have been avoided. Instead, he has been replaced by an army man who in the past was more than once employed by the late Marshal to " clean up " internal difficulties. It is symptomatic that for the first time General Rydz-Smigly has not only openly emerged from his reserve, but has taken steps to emphasize the fact that it was he—Pilsudski's successor as Inspector-General of the army—who got General Slawoj-Skladkowski appointed to the premiership by the President of the Republic. Not only has the idea of an understanding with the Left opposition been dropped, but the country will henceforward be ruled in an " authoritative " military way. The most recent decree, officially making General Rydz-Smigly " No. 1 " in Poland—next to the President of the Republic—and placing even the Cabinet and the Premier under his orders merely confirms this trend of policy.

There is no doubt that with the army's support the new government can suppress the political effects of the present situation, but it cannot remove its causes. The internal social and political pacification of Poland cannot be accomplished that way. The hollowness of the system is too patent, and if the present Cabinet attempts to use too much " authority " it will pay heavily for it. Nor is it possible to conduct simultaneously an expansionist economic policy, such as is promised, and maintain the present gold value of the zloty. " Neither deflation nor devaluation," says the new President of the Bank of Poland. But how that can be reconciled with a public works scheme to combat unemployment and raise the standard of living (a question of burning urgency), and also with increased expenditure on defence, is somewhat hard to see. As to the keeping of a balanced budget—a quite recent achievement after many years of deficit—and the maintenance of payments abroad, something more than a conjuring trick would have been required if these schemes had had to be carried out. For some time past it had been quite

clear that a moratorium or devaluation could scarcely be avoided much longer, and the fear of this greatly contributed to the general uneasiness about the zloty. An attempt was made to apply strict currency restrictions as a remedy, but the futility of the effort must have been obvious almost before it was made. No regulations of any kind could alter a situation which had been gradually developing on account of the unfavourable balance of payments and the consequent drain on the Bank of Poland's gold and foreign currency reserves. Within barely a month of the new Cabinet taking office the suspension of foreign debt transfers had to be announced, and henceforward service of the loans involved will be made in zlotys through special accounts opened for this purpose by the Bank of Poland. Though this will mean a saving of about 100 million zlotys per year it is by no means certain that suspension of debt transfers alone will relieve the present tension, and devaluation may yet prove unavoidable.

So much for the internal political and economic difficulties, the solution of which is getting more and more urgent. There remains the question of Poland's foreign policy, which for a number of years has been conducted by the able, sphinx-like and ambulant Colonel Beck. The actual problem of foreign policy, as far as the Poles are concerned, is a plain issue. If they wish to maintain their freedom and independence, if they wish to avert the danger of a new German or Russian invasion, then the observance of the strictest possible neutrality is their best or only chance. Of that all Poles are aware, and it is one of the few things on which they all agree. But the actual translation of this axiom into their foreign policy has undergone many changes, and even now opinions differ very considerably as to how this neutrality should best be observed and consolidated. It goes without saying, however, that to be rendered effective such a policy must be backed up by the strongest possible system of national defence to make the potential aggressor (whoever he may be) realize what obstacles he would meet if he attempted to attack or intimidate Poland. Of late Poland has manifested a strong desire to collaborate with the Baltic and Scandinavian countries, while in the rest of Europe she has both her old friends, like Hungary, and old enemies like Czechoslovakia or Lithuania. The vital question, however, is that of Poland's relations with her

two formidable neighbours, Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany, and this affects also the extremely complicated nature of her present relations with France.

When the future historian comes to consider the European diplomacy of our times, he will have to devote some considerable effort to the study of Poland's foreign relations. In an article like the present one it is impossible to go into the details of this most interesting aspect of the Poland I have just revisited. To put it briefly, if somewhat paradoxically, France and England may yet succeed in making the Poles do what none of them wants (Colonel Beck possibly being the only exception), namely, drive them into the arms of Germany. The position is simply this: Poland can no longer rely on France and England to help her in the hour of need. Their record of weakness and surrender to "major considerations" is there for everybody to judge. If France did not react more actively to the Rhineland business, if England has allowed herself to be humiliated by Italy—in both cases when their own direct interests were at stake—what reason is there to suppose that they would so much as move a finger to honour their pledges to other countries?

On the other hand, Hitler at the moment needs Poland more than she needs him. Though the Poles have surrendered nothing to him, he has wiped out more than fifteen years of violent German anti-Polish propaganda by accepting the *status quo* of the Corridor; he also wants Polish raw materials and is prepared to pay for them—the economic collaboration between Warsaw and Berlin is rapidly getting closer. Nothing is more significant in that respect than the way both Poland and Germany are handling the Danzig problem at the present moment. They want at any price to avoid a clash (which to me seems sooner or later absolutely unavoidable). If Brüning or Stresemann had behaved over Danzig the way Hitler is behaving now, there would have been a revolution in Germany. As to the Poles, they have no illusions but they want to keep up the present "friendship" with Germany as long as it will last. They think it serves their purpose.

The Poles resent the way they have been treated by France—that policy of alternating flattery and kicks, which can drive anybody crazy. Foolishly enough, they even grudge France the

Franco-Soviet pact, although surely from their point of view anything that separates Germany and Russia should be highly welcome ; after all nothing could be more dangerous to Poland than the revival of Rapallo, i.e., of close Soviet-German co-operation. Notwithstanding all this the Poles are never tired of repeating that the alliance with France remains the foundation of their foreign policy.

It may be that the path chosen by Colonel Beck is dangerous ; yet so long as the present so-called " peace " remains, his policy is not devoid of shrewdness and vision. But the proposition becomes an entirely different one if it is assumed that sooner or later there will be another European war. Then a German alliance would prove fatal to Poland, for in case of Germany's success it is hardly likely that Germany would show the Poles, whom they really hate and despise, much consideration ; in case of defeat the position would be even worse. Joining the anti-German camp would at least give Poland a hopeful chance in case of success.

But perhaps that is looking too far ahead. Poland's problems today are of such an urgent nature that the future of international relations—grave though it is—cannot be said to be of immediate concern. Europe, at any rate for a while to come, is likely to go on " muddling through." What is much more to the point is whether Poland can or will. A nation which has suffered so much, which has fought so gallantly and which has succeeded against terrible odds in so many ways deserves to live and to thrive. It has all the makings of a great country. But it does not do itself justice. If a paraphrase of Talleyrand's famous dictum is permissible, " The mismanagement of Poland is worse than a crime—it is folly."

THE POLICY OF PIUS XI

BY MICHAEL DE LA BEDOYERE

POPE PIUS XI has recently celebrated his eightieth birthday. Let us frankly admit it : most non-Catholics and not a few Catholics felt that a shadow had fallen over the festivities associated with so auspicious an occasion. The celebration followed almost immediately after the success of Italian arms in a war which was commonly described in Great Britain, for example, as an instance of barbarous aggression as black as any in history. And it would seem that the Catholics of Italy, led by the clergy, approved the war and rejoiced in its outcome. It would seem too, that the Vatican—which is not Italy—tolerated Italian conduct and at any rate allowed that its outcome is, in so far, a happy event.

To say the least of it, all this has put Catholics in Anglo-Saxon countries on the defensive, and many and ingenious have been the arguments adduced to show that the obvious judgment against Italian Catholics and the Vatican can and should be qualified through further study.

It has for example been said that the Church contents herself with general prohibitions or condemnations of types of action and never singles out, except for purposes of discipline among her own subjects, specific cases of immoral conduct for condemnation. Attempts have been made to prove that the war was not in fact one of aggression on Italy's part. We have been reminded that no country at war ever believes itself to be engaged in an unjust war, and that ecclesiastics as a whole feel bound to support their lawfully constituted authority. As for the Pope himself, one can recall that more than once he has condemned wars of aggression and that in the case of the present war he not only remained silent but forbade any signs of rejoicing at the Vatican and ordered Italian bishops not to give their gold pectoral crosses to be melted down. Only when the war was

over and done with did he venture to rejoice in peace and in a victory which may well be thought to be more likely to ensure an era of stability than an Abyssinian victory leading to anarchy in Italy.

Such arguments, however, sound to Anglo-Saxon ears like the special pleading of a man trying to wriggle out of a position whose weakness leaps to the eye. It does not, of course, follow from this that the arguments are not in fact weighty, but to have the slightest chance of carrying conviction they need to be incorporated into a totally different setting.

Very little effort to present the constructive and complete point of view of the Vatican has been made in this country, yet there is one obvious argument that should make thinking Englishmen pause before condemning Pius XI and the Church. It is this. Is it really conceivable that an experienced Pontiff, a first-class scholar, an able diplomatist, a man in youth trained to the ways and code of sport, a person by all accounts of singular holiness combined with clarity of mind—is it conceivable that such a man should fall at the first temptation into the crudest nationalism, the most arrant cowardice, into a course of conduct that must necessarily cause grave scandal to those of his subjects who prefer to follow the lead of fifty nations rather than accept the bullying of the leader of one interested party? Surely common sense alone should make one pause before subscribing to this view. Popes have done queer things in their time, but there could never have been anything queerer in the history of the Popes than to find one of the character of Pius XI, during a period when the conscience of the world is peculiarly touchy and delicate, not merely giving in without a fight to a self-constituted autocrat who makes no pretence of using the Church as anything more than a useful ally, but actually supporting him with all the weight of his unique ecclesiastical dignity.

What then can have happened?

The truth is that Pius XI is working out a policy of the nature of which the ordinary Englishman has not the faintest understanding. He is not thinking in terms of politics at all nor is he thinking in terms of the present day: he is thinking of the Church of tomorrow.

It is no exaggeration to say that ever since Soviet Russia was

admitted to the League of Nations Pius XI has ceased to have much regard for the League. To the Englishman accustomed to compromise this may seem curious behaviour, for if the League stands for a good ideal it is, in so far, all to the good that Russia should belong to it. The Catholic, however, has a deep suspicion of *natural* goodness, divorced from supernatural guidance and authority. He believes, it must be remembered, in an infallible visible Church which, while based on natural reason and therefore appealing to the conscience of natural man, nevertheless enlightens, secures and guarantees with its Divine authority man's unaided reason and conscience. The Catholic believes that it is to the teaching through the centuries of authoritative Catholic Christianity that Western man owes so much of a detailed code of ethics as he still retains. As the years go by and the general influence of the Church weakens by comparison with secular influences, whether of individual thinkers or of the State, so does there open an ever wider gap between Christian ethics as taught and guaranteed by the Church and the accepted code of Western peoples and countries. Hence the League itself, while it may incorporate a great deal of the teaching of Catholic theologians in the field of international relations, stands in the eyes of the Pope as a structure that may or may not happen to be sound in itself but which is inevitably at the disposal of the strongest political Powers, Powers that make no pretence to be guided by other than utilitarian considerations and which in some cases are professedly anti-Christian.

When therefore an international structure directed by secular Powers—and all the more dangerous in that its incorporation of moral idealism makes it less suspect—admitted into its inner councils the representatives of a nation whose avowed aim is world revolution for materialistic and atheistic ends, it must have seemed to the Pope—as it did to most Catholics—that the League lost all claim to be taken seriously from a thought-out Christian point of view.

This is all very well, it may be argued, but what is the Pope going to do about it? What can he suggest to take its place? Can he really suppose that a League of Christian Powers, with himself as its head, is a practical idea in the modern world?

The present Pontiff is certainly much too much of a realist to

have any such delusions. His policy has been thoroughly consistent. His pontificate has been devoted to the building up of a Catholicism that, as it were, side-tracks the national and international problems that are the main concern of the secular world.

He has pursued two lines of action. The first is the organization of what is called "Catholic Action." The second is the establishment of the Church in Africa, Asia and to some extent in the Americas, as an organization largely independent of European support.

"Catholic Action" really means the gathering together under one united leadership in each country of all the forces of the Church so that they may form a kind of Catholic front consciously set up against the organized secular and especially totalitarian fronts. The idea seems to be copied to some extent from the methods of both Communists and Fascists. The clergy and laity are to work together under the direction of the bishops for the purpose of spiritual conquest, but the spirit of the movement really consists in making every Catholic realize that his being a Catholic involves something more than his profession of a religion of which in the past he too often tended to be slightly ashamed. He is to be as proud of his Catholicism as any Fascist or Communist is of his political creeds. He is to realize that Catholicism means a special attitude to the whole of life. Wherever he is, whatever he is doing, he is to be an active apostle of Christianity.

In this country the movement in its full elaboration has as yet hardly penetrated, but in France, Italy, Belgium and Spain the Church as a fighting, aggressive body has been largely reorganized.

Despite this new spirit and organization, the Vatican has few illusions about the likelihood of reclaiming European nations to the Church. In Spain for example Catholic Action, which had its opportunity when Gil Robles was in power, seems to have had very little success. The time no doubt has been too short and the work to be accomplished after a century of liberalism too great. In Germany the battle seems lost already, and the feeling in the Vatican at present is that within thirty years the Church there will be reduced to an ineffectual minority.

In Italy, for accidental reasons, Church and State have helped each other to the strengthening of the influence of both, but the Vatican is perfectly aware of the dangers of Italian Fascism and the opportunism of its dictator. The Catholic history of the present pontificate will not be written round the Lateran Treaty, which was no more than a convenient solution to a tiresome problem.

The point here is that no more is expected of "Catholic Action" in Europe than the spiritual revitalising of individual Catholics and the formation of a spirit that will resist as long as possible the growing secularism and totalitarianism of Europe.

It is for this reason that Pius XI, with the farsightedness of the greater Popes, has been quietly working for the establishment of the Church outside Europe. This work is commonly called taking an interest in foreign missions. But it is much more than this. In time it will be seen that the most important Encyclical of the present pontificate is the overlooked *Rerum Ecclesiae* (1926) in which the principle of self-government in the Church in distant lands was described and encouraged. In time the Church in Africa and Asia is to be entirely served by native bishops and clergy, the natural culture of the native race is to be incorporated as far as possible into the external working of the Church, its art, its method of appeal and so on. It need hardly be said that there is no question here of independence from Rome nor of any change in dogma or the fundamentals of Catholic worship and teaching. The change constitutes, however, a very definite and far-reaching breach from the tradition of making the Catholic Church throughout the world as like the Church in Rome in every detail of action and culture.

There is, therefore, no doubt that Pius XI, while doing all he can to strengthen the Church in Europe, envisages the possibility of a catastrophe, such for example as a war or the rapid growth of a persecuting totalitarianism, and is consequently taking statesmanlike steps to compensate for such an event by the rapid development of the Church in Africa and Asia and the rendering it as far as possible independent of European leadership and support.

It has been necessary to say all this in order to explain why the Vatican does not at the moment share our preoccupation

The first part of the history of the world is the history of the creation of the world and the history of the first man, Adam. The second part is the history of the world from the time of Adam to the time of the birth of Jesus Christ. The third part is the history of the world from the time of the birth of Jesus Christ to the present time.

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Lastly comes the problem of Italy, the problem with which we started. One has to remember that beggars, so to say, cannot be choosers. Convinced of the growing a-morality of Western Europe with its League, profoundly aware of the increased anti-Christianity of Germany with its threat to Central Europe, and under no illusions whatsoever with regard to the menace of Bolshevism both through its crude anti-God propaganda and its more subtle methods of provoking disturbance in the West, either through the League or otherwise, Pius XI finds himself at peace with a Catholic nation which, however potentially dangerous as regards its government in many respects, nevertheless does give the Church and himself liberty of action, not only respects Catholic teaching in the social field but incorporates much of it in the constitution, and also stands as a bulwark against both Bolshevism and the secular drift of Western States, a drift that may land more of the States than one imagines into Socialism and Bolshevism. Is it any wonder then that with his constructive views about what can be saved of true Christianity and about where Christianity may flourish again, he should look upon the Abyssinian war and the conduct of Italy as a secondary matter? Placed in this setting do not the arguments adduced in the first part of this paper cease to be the last hope of the debater fighting a losing battle, and become instead the obvious justification for not disturbing more than can be helped the development of a constructive and far-reaching plan not only to save Catholic Christianity from disintegration and virtual destruction, but to build it up anew in the hearts of European Catholics and in the lands that lie outside our comparatively small continent?

And after all no one can deny that to do this is the first and most important duty of any Pope.

THE LIBEL RACKET

BY KENNETH HENDERSON

IF Shakespeare were alive and writing *Othello* in the England of today, it is possible that Iago would be made to say :

" . . . he that filches from me my good name
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
But makes me *rich* indeed."

For nowadays if a person's reputation, be it good, bad or indifferent, is defamed in writing a golden prospect is open to him if he is prepared to avail himself of the complexities which now surround the law of libel in England. A defamatory statement circulated, say, by a news agency and published in several newspapers may result in the person defamed receiving by way of compensation (!) a sum of money far in excess of that which he would be awarded if he lost two or more limbs and was disfigured for life as the result of a motor accident. And the paradox is all the greater when it is realized that the defamed is not required to prove—as indeed in most cases he could not prove—that his pocket has suffered to the extent of one penny.

Now the law of England always has been that a person is entitled to have and maintain his reputation unsullied, and any unjustified attack upon that reputation is, if anything, more grievous a wrong than any trespass to property, but owing to the capriciousness of juries and to the judicial determination of " nice points," the law of defamation, particularly in regard to libel, has become so complex that the very threat of proceedings is to most people a very grave menace, as it may involve them in ruin.

The bare contemplation of the possibility of being involved in litigation is sufficient to undermine the fortitude of some otherwise resolute characters. The late Jerome K. Jerome had a deep-rooted horror of legal proceedings. When he was conducting *The Idler*—that must be a great many years ago—we fell to discussing the threat of an action arising out of some idle thoughts he had contributed to the magazine. Jerome was

genuinely worried and had been unable to do any real work for several days. I was very young at the time, and consequently both optimistic and enthusiastic. "Fight it," I said, "you may win." "Fight it: fight it," he repeated. "Let me tell you this. If I were walking down the Strand and a man tried to take my watch from me I would fight to the last drop of blood in me. But if that same man issued a writ against me and claimed that my watch was his I should hand it over at once and should be glad that I had got off so lightly."

Now Jerome was not a timid person, and if he reacted in that way to the threat of litigation what must be the reaction of thousands of others who are condemned to earning their living by committing words to paper?

Surely something is amiss with the law of libel when we find His Majesty's judges using on the Bench expressions such as "gold digging operations," and "the menace of costs" when referring to certain classes of libel actions. The late Mr. Justice McCardie, who both as counsel and judge had an unrivalled knowledge of the subject, stigmatized more than one of the claims which came before him as little short of disguised blackmail. Speaking from the Bench on one occasion he said:—

"I recognize the power of the Press to injure reputations and I agree that the law must be strong to enable a good character to be vindicated and to penalize baseless imputations.

"But I know quite well how large a number of fraudulent undesirable persons remain unexposed through the severity of the rules of law with respect to defendants in cases of defamation. The public, too, often loses the protection it so greatly needs.

"I know also of the large trade that exists in seeking to extort damages from newspaper proprietors and others under circumstances which are little better than disguised blackmail."

It is to be feared that the attitude of many to the vexed subject of defamation is that it is a matter which concerns principally wealthy corporations who are well able to look after their own interests.

This is a mistaken and short-sighted view. The right of fair comment on matters of public interest is not a right peculiar to the publishers of newspapers, periodicals or books. It is a right enjoyed, if one may use the term, by everybody, and the less able a person is to exercise and enjoy that right for himself the

more necessary it is that others should freely enjoy and exercise it on his behalf. This freedom of fair comment is indeed valuable in inverse ratio to the degree of information a person has. The less a person knows the more desirable it is that he should be informed by someone else.

For a proper appreciation of the problems involved some short statement of the present law of defamation is required. In England a person's reputation is protected against defamatory words by the law of libel if the words are in writing, and by the law of slander if they are spoken only.

There is, however, a very important difference between the protection afforded to spoken and written defamation. If the defamatory words are spoken, no protection is given (except in certain special cases) unless it can be shown that the speaking of the words has resulted in some financial loss to the person of whom they were spoken. The special cases in which an action will lie without proof of such financial loss are those in which the words impute that the plaintiff has been guilty of a criminal offence punishable "corporally" (*i.e.*, by imprisonment) or that he suffers from some contagious disease, or where they are spoken of him in the way of his office, trade or profession, or where they suggest of a woman that she has been unchaste. In these cases the law assumes that the words must from their very nature have resulted in some damage to the reputation, and does not require proof of any financial loss.

In the case of libel, however, the protection given by the law is very much greater, and an action may be brought and damages recovered for any defamatory words without any proof that a single pennyworth of financial loss has been suffered by reason of the publication.

Today the remedy given by the law of libel is proving wider than is required for the legitimate protection of the reputation, and in consequence the law is being increasingly used for the purpose of extorting money by persons who are not concerned with any fancied injury which their reputation may have sustained, but whose sole object is to make money.

Several factors have combined to produce this result. First, in libel the damages are "at large," that is to say, there are no fixed rules for calculating their amount and the jury are entitled

to award such sum as they think fit without regard to the amount of any financial loss which the plaintiff may have suffered, and indeed even if there has been no loss at all. While libel is not the only wrong for which an action may be brought without proof that any financial loss has been sustained, it is by far the most important. The judge can, it is true, assist the jury by indicating to them the matters which they should bear in mind in assessing the damages, such as the extent of the publication of the libel and the conduct of the defendants since the publication was made, who by a prompt apology may have reduced the damages or by their persistence in the allegations may have increased them. It is not possible, however, for the judge to give the jury any guide as to what effect in money each or any of the above factors should have.

In consequence there has grown up in libel actions what may be described as a fashion for very large verdicts, and within recent years awards of £5,000 and upwards have become the rule rather than the exception. Anyone who doubts that the amount awarded by a jury can depend on the fashion of the moment has only to compare the very large sums which were awarded in breach of promise cases before the war (the largest being £50,000 in 1913) with the trifling amounts awarded in such cases to-day.

Members of the public, when called to serve on a jury, naturally carry into the jury box with them the idea that these inflated damages are proper.

It may be asked : Is there no check on the amount of damages which may be given ? The answer is that for practical purposes there is none. The defendants have always the right, it is true, to apply to the Court of Appeal to have the verdict of the jury set aside if it can be shown that the jury have taken into account some factors which they ought not to have considered, or that the amount is so large that no twelve reasonable men could have given it. In libel claims, however, this right is of very little value. The matters which a jury may properly consider are so vague in nature and it is so difficult to give them even an approximate cash value that it is almost impossible to succeed in such an application.

It thus follows that for those who are speculatively inclined

a claim for libel offers rewards far beyond even the most favourable venture on the Stock Exchange. Recent legal decisions, moreover, have extended enormously the class of statements which are to be regarded as defamatory and have correspondingly increased the opportunities for speculative and less valid claims.

In 1929 the Court of Appeal held that a statement innocent in itself might nevertheless become defamatory by reason of some facts unknown to the person publishing the statement. In the case in question a newspaper had published a photograph of a man and woman at a racecourse and had attached to the photograph a caption stating that the man (Mr. C.) was engaged to the woman. This information had been obtained at first hand. It transpired that the man was already married to someone else and his wife brought proceedings for libel, alleging that the words and the photograph conveyed the meaning to persons who knew her as Mrs. C., that she had been living with Mr. C. without being married to him. The newspaper was, of course, quite unaware of the existence of Mrs. C., and had no reason at all to think that Mr. C. was married, but the Court of Appeal held that even though the words in the caption were quite innocent by themselves, the jury were entitled to find them defamatory because of the extrinsic fact, which was quite unknown to the newspaper, that Mr. C. was already married.

The claim in the case referred to was, of course, perfectly properly made, but the effect of the decision will be readily appreciated. In short, it means that no amount of care exercised beforehand can prevent the publication of statements which, although they appear innocent on the face of them, may yet, owing to circumstances unknown at the time of the publication, have a serious defamatory meaning. Indeed, it may be said that anyone whose name appears in print is invited to consider whether some accidental slip may not amount to a defamatory statement and justify the putting forward of a claim for libel.

The Courts have not yet perhaps made quite clear what limits (if any) there are on the principles laid down in the case mentioned above, and this uncertainty undoubtedly adds to the difficulties of those concerned in libel actions. It would appear that the above decision is capable of making almost any inaccurate statement defamatory.

Assume that a picture paper publishes a photograph of a woman and child with the caption "Mrs. Y. with her three-year-old daughter." Actually the daughter, let us say, is only two and Mrs. Y. has not been married three years. She may claim that the words mean, to persons knowing when she was married, that the child was born before her marriage, and a claim may be put forward on behalf of the child herself that the words mean that she is illegitimate.

This wide extension of the field of defamatory statements has enormously increased the number of claims for libel, and the difficulties of those against whom the claim is brought have been added to by another legal decision, the short effect of which is that unless the defendants can prove that the libel is true, they are not allowed at the trial to refer to specific facts relating to the plaintiff's character. Thus a person even with a criminal record may recover heavy damages from a jury who are quite unaware of his character.

It is perhaps this last type of case which interferes most seriously with the right of public criticism. A newspaper in endeavouring to warn the public against methods adopted by some person may in all good faith make some mis-statement of fact on some minor matter. The person complaining is entitled to bring proceedings against the newspaper and recover damages. The fact that his character is bad will not be taken into account by the jury in assessing damages.

The results of these two cases are felt equally in the claims which are settled before trial and these, of course, far outnumber the actions which are in fact heard in Court.

If the fashion for large damages has made of many libel claims a speculation in which the potential profit is very large, another factor has given the speculation the additional advantage that the amount which need be invested by the speculator may be very small—indeed, he may get his gamble for nothing. This is due to the existence of what are known as "speculative" solicitors, who are prepared to conduct litigation for a plaintiff on the terms that no costs will be charged to the plaintiff. The solicitor relies on recovering his costs from any sum which can be extorted from the defendants.

In some cases it would appear indeed that it is the solicitor

who first draws the attention of the plaintiff to the existence of the defamatory statement and who invites him to "chance his luck."

Claims of this kind are, of course, not confined to the law of libel and they are very frequently met with by insurance companies in respect of injuries sustained through street accidents; but it seems obvious that it is directly contrary to the public interest that the law should be used as a means of speculation instead of as an instrument for the protection of rights.

It should not be thought that the number of solicitors who are prepared to conduct work on these terms is large, but it would be equally a mistake to ignore the fact that such solicitors do exist and that the assistance they give to litigants contributes materially to the undesirable type of libel claim so prevalent today.

It may be said that if the claim is a just one the defendants have no ground for complaining on being called on to pay, whereas if it is an unjust claim they will be successful if they defend the action and will escape liability. This, however, is not the whole truth. To defend a libel action involves legal costs which may run into several thousands of pounds. It is true that the defendants if successful will be entitled to recover those costs from the plaintiff, but it will be found that in almost all cases of the type mentioned above the plaintiff is an impecunious person quite unable to meet any part of those costs. Whenever such a claim is made, the defendants, if they contest it, are faced with the certainty of spending, without hope of recovery, large sums of money in establishing their rights. If they can avoid this at an early stage of the proceedings by a payment in the nature of "nuisance money," which will provide the plaintiff's solicitor with his costs and give some sum in addition to his client, is it to be wondered at that they take advantage of the opportunity?

It is for this reason also that the recent amendment in the law of libel which entitled a defendant to pay money into Court while still disputing his liability—a privilege previously enjoyed in all actions except libel actions—has not proved very effective in practice. It is true that if the jury award no more than the amount paid in, the plaintiff is in most cases ordered to pay the defendants' costs, but apart from the difficulty in "guessing"

the figure at which the "guess" of the jury will ultimately fix the damages, the relief given to the defendants is in most cases of little practical value because, for the reasons stated earlier, the plaintiff will be unable to pay any part of the costs incurred.

The remedy, I suggest, is to be found in an attempt to place the law of libel more or less on the same basis as the law of slander, and in giving to the judge some wider discretion in the matter of costs. The result of such an amendment would be that, except where the law of slander recognizes a right of action without proof of financial loss, proof of such damage would be required also for libel. In this way the number of purely frivolous claims would be reduced without a single person whose reputation has sustained any real injury being deprived of his remedy. An additional provision which would defeat claims fostered by unscrupulous solicitors would be the rule that in cases which produce the greater number of the speculative claims, namely, where the words relate to the office, profession or trade of the plaintiff or impute unchastity to any woman, no larger sum can be recovered as costs than is awarded as damages unless the judge makes a special order.

This rule would make it no longer profitable for solicitors to promote trivial litigation.

This last provision is not the novelty that it may appear to be, for it has for over 40 years applied to claims for slander imputing unchastity to a woman, and seems to have been effective in preventing frivolous claims.

These views I endeavoured to embody in the draft Bill which I prepared for the consideration of the delegates to the Empire Press Union at their meeting in London in June. The principles of the Bill have been approved, but in these days of crowded legislation some considerable public support will be required if it is not, like most private members' Bills, to fall by the wayside.

The acceptance of these amendments should remove an evil which is contrary to the best interests of the public, and restore the freedom of criticism while enabling the law of libel still adequately to fulfil its function of protecting the reputation of the individual.

MEN AND POLICY IN INDIA

BY SIR HENRY WHEELER

WE have just passed through that period of the year at which the Englishman is accustomed to seek the company of those associated with him by ties of locality or profession, to renew old friendships and recall common memories on the occasion of the annual "Dinner." Figuring prominently in the list of such engagements are the gatherings of those who, in one way or another, have been brought together in India. Provincial and service dinners are regular annual events, and despite the similarity of the proceedings from one year to another they seldom fail to attract a good attendance. Speeches of varying merit are an inevitable feature in the programme, and the range of interests with which they deal is wide, but whatever the aspect of life in India with which they are concerned, and whatever the part of that vast continent with which they are particularly connected, they will be found to exhibit one common feature. They depict the life of the speaker and his fellows not as one of sorrowful exile and regret, but as rich in pleasant memories and interesting incidents. In no sense do those retired from the Eastern scene spend the evening commiserating with those who may shortly be returning, nor do those still active on the Indian stage bewail the hard fate which led them there. Not infrequently do the men who have already played their part regard with envy those who still appear behind the footlights.

This phenomenon is worthy of remark at a time when Indian affairs have lately attracted so much attention and the controversies arising out of impending political changes have led to the expression of apprehensions and forebodings calculated to discourage those who in the past would have contemplated an Indian career. However genuine the fears upon which these

warnings were based, the effect of them has nowhere been more unfortunate than on recruitment for the Indian Civil Service. Formerly the goal of many keen and able men at the Universities, in recent years the attraction seems to have temporarily disappeared ; and even where employment under Government is sought, preference has not seldom been given to other Services which in former days would never have been regarded as on an equal footing. Undoubtedly the pendulum has swung too far. The shadows in the picture have been exaggerated, and it is time that steps were taken to depict the facts in juster proportions.

And more especially is this desirable now that the present Secretary of State for India has frankly faced the position, and by the practical separation of English and Indian recruitment has removed one real difficulty of recent years both in the way of securing the total number of recruits required and of ensuring their proper racial distribution. Further, encouraged by the experience of the Colonial Office, Lord Zetland has announced the intention of resorting to nomination to supplement, if need be, the normal entry by examination. It is a most welcome fact that, as stated by Lord Willingdon at the recent Indian Civil Service Dinner, the response has been excellent, and there is every reason to anticipate that the Service will soon be brought up to its full strength and that the proportions of 50 per cent. of English recruits and the like number of Indians, which in theory has been the standard since the report of the Lee Commission, will once more be attained.

To consider first the fears of the pessimists which have undoubtedly influenced parents in regarding a Government career in India as fraught with too much uncertainty to justify its adoption by their sons. These are based largely on the fact that the political structure in the future will be materially different from that in the past, which is undoubtedly true. Very shortly in the provinces, and at the Centre whenever Federation may materialise, Indian Ministers will, under the Governors and Governor-General, and subject to the control of legislative bodies, take over the direction of affairs, whereas till then Members of Council drawn from the Service have had a share, and the control of the Legislative Councils has been more

indirect. It is not the purpose of the present article to argue yet again the merits of these changes. In the course of the examination of the problem extending over years all that can be said on either side has found expression, but it is to be remembered that the change is one of degree rather than an absolutely new departure. Ever since the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms of 1919 Indian Ministers have exercised control over the wide Transferred field of administration, while the influence of the Legislative Councils has been constantly increasing. On the Reserved side, too, half the Members of Council have been non-official Indians. It is a considerable time, therefore, since the old autocratic position of the Service disappeared. When the "old days" are recalled, it should be borne in mind that they will soon be "very old," and since experience has already been gained of a different state of affairs which has not hitherto rendered official life impossible, it should not be too hastily assumed that it will do so in the future. Again, can there be a reversion to the "old days" in any country in the world? For good or evil the World War closed an epoch and life is lived everywhere under vastly different conditions from before. In this respect India is no exception to a general fact.

But in one aspect, and one which may well influence those contemplating the possibility of Indian service, there has been little change, and that is that official life in India offers opportunities of shouldering responsibilities and dealing with affairs affecting intimately the lives of thousands, which will not occur to the ordinary man, and that, too, at a time when the officer is still young. As soon as he has passed his departmental examinations (mainly in languages and law) the new recruit will be given a territorial charge, it may be comprising half a million people, and with the maintenance of order, the magistracy and the lives and interests of a predominantly agricultural populace he will find himself most intimately concerned. It is an excellent tradition of the Service to require responsibility to be assumed when young; at the outset of his career an officer has every opportunity of showing of what he is capable. In former times he would have had a direct interest in local self-government, roads, schools, and medical relief, all of which afforded admirable opportunities for getting to know the people,

but this is now in non-official hands. Official influence, however, can still make itself felt and can afford valuable advice and guidance.

On the other hand, official energies are being increasingly directed towards village improvement, not only the amelioration of the physical conditions of the countryside but the encouragement of fresh activities in rural life. Broadcasting is opening up possibilities of getting into touch with the masses in a way which was previously undreamed of, while agricultural improvement and the extension of the system of co-operative credit are movements of comparatively recent growth, both badly in need of official stimulus. In fact, there is little touching the daily interests of the nation with which the official cannot usefully make himself acquainted, and in which his help will not be of the utmost value. Indeed it is part of his duties to get in touch with his charge and to be alive to what is going on. The leisurely tours on horseback which were characteristic of earlier days, with tents pitched in the village grove, afforded admirable opportunities of doing so : latterly the motor car has tended to substitute more casual dashes from headquarters and back, which is to be regretted. But it should still be possible, while making use of the wider range of the car, to retain something of the old system. The Indian will only speak freely to someone he knows, and mutual confidence takes time to develop.

Passing from the sub-division to the district and from the district to the division and the province, these features are common to life on the executive side, the importance and area of the charge increasing as time goes on, but to those who prefer a more sedentary life the judicial line has attractions : indeed under the new conditions it will in some ways offer better pecuniary prospects, while there are various specialised departments, for instance, Finance, the Post Office, and the Customs which afford opportunities to men of that particular bent. The machinery at headquarters is the Secretariat, with its grades of Under Secretary, Deputy Secretary and Secretary. A thorough grounding in the details of administration is an essential qualification for the Secretariat, and preferably terms of district and Secretarial work should alternate, the living touch with actual affairs being thus preserved. At headquarters

the administration is viewed over a wider range and various amenities are enjoyed—a larger society and an annual sojourn in the hills. The Central Secretariat of the Government of India is recruited from the Provincial cadres and is the natural goal of the ambitious man ; the all-India outlook is necessarily wider than that of any one province. But there are those to whom the heavy and continuous office work of the Secretariat does not appeal and who give preference to the greater freedom of the ordinary executive side.

It is evident, therefore, that the career offered by the Indian Civil Service is one of considerable variety. On the importance of the English element in the Service, stress has often been laid, and it will in no way be lessened under the new political conditions. One of the regrettable results of the reforms has been the intensification of communal feeling. The old antagonisms, which were more or less dormant under the old regime, have tended to flare forth now that power is to be attained by one community or the other. The greater the need, therefore, of the independent standpoint of the English officer, and the value of it has already frequently been demonstrated. This need imply no aspersion on his Indian colleagues. However impartial he may be, the fact that he belongs to one or other of the rival communities is always liable to be alleged against him as a disqualification. Again, without raising the controversial issue of the relative efficiency of English and Indian officers—which has been the bane of more than one Royal Commission—there is little question that either category can contribute special gifts of its own. The Indian must always possess the more intimate knowledge of the country : the Englishman probably, on the average, preserves his activity better and is more willing to take responsibility at an earlier age. The structure of the administrative machine is doubtless Oriental, but the English element has introduced many features of value in it. If these are to be retained, English officers in the Service are indispensable. Again, the future development of India is conceived on democratic lines and Parliamentary institutions are familiar to the Englishman. In so far as their successful working depends mainly upon the spirit in which they are approached, some inspiration from English sources is essential.

Another feature in the Indian situation which may rightly prove to be attractive is that of novelty. Admittedly the country stands on the threshold of a big experiment. There are those who view the future with the utmost confidence, others who do so with dismay. The voices of both have been uplifted in recent times with equal emphasis. But the truth probably is that it is unwise to prophesy too boldly. Even under the old regime, India was a land of the unexpected. Peace might seem assured and some sudden outburst arise: the skies might look overcast and then miraculously cleared. A Viceroy much experienced in the affairs of Western countries, once remarked to me that whereas in other countries he had always thought that he could foretell with fair certainty the probable course of events, in India we never seemed to know a fortnight ahead what was likely to happen. If this was the case when the lines of administration were fairly stereotyped, it can scarcely be expected that the future will be more certain. What is this huge new electorate going to do? Will it be drilled into servile submission to a few astute organizers, or will it develop on lines of its own? Will the majority be apathetic, at the mercy of an active minority, or will a widespread interest be evinced? What will be the influence of the feminine vote, which even if still in small proportion to the population, has reached a number much in excess of anything previously contemplated?

Pending experience, none of these questions can be confidently answered, and this possibly accounts for the lull which at the moment is noticeable in Indian affairs. Certain it is that the mere recording of all these votes is going to be a task of no small difficulty, and various curious developments unknown to a Western franchise will probably manifest themselves. But whatever the results of the elections the whole spirit of the administration will be changed by them. The popular voice will come more and more to be the deciding factor.

Given this change, new interests will come to the fore and others will make themselves more loudly heard, while Western panaceas will be advocated which are entirely new to the Eastern World. Few would have foretold that already Socialism in India would be publicly advocated by a leading Indian politician, while Communism is lurking in the background. Unfortunately

the economic problems in India are as controversial as the communal ones. Between the money-lender and the *raiya* little love is lost : the relations between *raiya* and landholder are frequently strained. But all these matters of future doubt, uncertainty, and even risk merely emphasise the need of a strong administrative machine, fully manned and efficient, both on the English and the Indian side. The new recruit will find himself faced with unexpected situations, in coping with which he can display enterprise and ingenuity.

But to the variety and novelty of work may be added diversity of scene. No two provinces are alike, and each presents problems of its own. The characteristics of the races inhabiting these administrative units differ as widely as the areas in which they dwell, and there is a multitude of tongues. Even within the same province there is little uniformity, and most districts present special features of their own. There is thus a wide scope for the display of special aptitudes or for the exercise of particular tastes.

It can therefore be fairly claimed on behalf of the Indian Civil Service that it still affords a man's career in which there is every chance of rendering notable public service. From the pecuniary standpoint, in no country is a government official likely to be a rich man ; if money is the main aim, then it is true that other directions of making it should be sought. But a reasonable competence is offered, and in many ways the conditions of service are noticeably better than they were. The timorous may ask : " What is the absolute guarantee that things will remain unaltered ? " Frankly there is none, either here or anywhere else. The world has changed, is changing, and will change, and India cannot remain static. But the question of security for Service interests was fairly faced in Parliament and safeguards were inserted in the Act with the definite statement that they were intended to be real, although the hope was quite reasonably expressed that the good sense of Indian politicians would render the application of them unnecessary. The risk, therefore, is no greater than a spirit of enterprise might well accept, and it is to the enterprise of British youth that an appeal has never failed in the past, nor will it in the future.

IS ENGLISH A DEAD LANGUAGE ?

BY V. S. PRITCHETT

I DO not know. But an article by Mr. H. E. Bates in a recent number of *THE FORTNIGHTLY* and comments by smart reviewers on the superiority of the language of the American negro, gangster, and truck driver, argue that the prose of the contemporary English novel is dead. And so a lot of it is ; many modern novels in the long manner are long not because of their material but because the writers use three words where one alone is necessary. The necessary one thus dies of suffocation. If we are to judge by the pallor of the prose of the English middle-brow novel, the corpse is already laid out ; and the clever American pressmen, Hemingway, O'Hara and Company, have arrived with plenty of bottles to hold a lurid wake around it. Ought we to join them ? No, but let us observe with pleasure the indecent feast and then examine the present peculiarities of English prose and speech more thoroughly : the superiority of the American "Sez you" to the English "Tell that to the marines" is a negligible factor in the controversy.

Mr. Bates is a more formidable and more precise opponent because he attacks us on our own ground. He confines his attack to the dialogue of the English novel, and says it is dead because it is unreal. The novelist does not use his ears. If he used them he would hear the rich if uncouth speech of ordinary people and would have to write it. Readers will remember how he gave the example of the talk of some nonconformist country people in the Weald of Kent ; readers will also remember their disappointment that he did not print this conversation. Mr. H. E. Bates accurately foresaw that his Kentish nonconformists would be the first to cry out for police censorship if they were to see their ordinary speech in print. There is something in Mr. Bates' view ; yet he must admit that the number of people who speak this vivid, uncouth, unprintable English

diminishes with every turn of the short-wave knob. Novelists in their flat, colourless, even stilted, dialogue are usually reporting very faithfully the grey acres of artizan and middle-class speech. Proletarian or rural ways of speech are rapidly disappearing, and the least life-like dialogue of all is produced by the so-called proletarian writers—cf. Mr. James Hanley and Mr. Sean O'Casey in his London plays. If it is still true that English speech is livelier in life than in fiction, there is an added reason: the great middle-class public, straining every nerve to forget its humble social origins of a generation or two back, has discovered the genteel uses of euphemism. "It won't be there if I don't look at it." One has only to listen to members of Parliament and to many of the B.B.C. programmes—it isn't enough to ban books, the B.B.C. has a list of banned words—or to read the popular press (I except their lively sporting columns). Euphemism as a habit of speech and thought is smarmed over English speech and life like cheap brilliantine on an office boy's hair. It is typically middle class. We "explore avenues", a lady is "in a certain condition", King Carol has a "friend", we "commit improprieties"; suffer from "internal pains" and "incomplete elimination", go to "rest rooms"—this is from America—and finally in unutterable gentility "pass away". This attitude of mind is pervasive. It is part of the three-word-to-one habit and is turning the prose of English novel into a vast Golders Green.

When to the loss of local dialects, the "refining" of the vernacular, the standardization introduced by broadcasting, is added the argument that the spread of literacy and the yearly increase in the output of printed matter wears out the language and impoverishes it, it looks as if we had better bury the corpse quickly. Mr. Bates loses because the kind of English dialogue he wants is vanishing and Messrs. Hemingway, O'Hara & Co., with all the transatlantic newspaper boys, seem to win. And yet . . .

For me arguments about the decline of English are pointless and without meaning. We can still talk of good and bad prose. As an Englishman I am a maker of modern English; as a novelist I have to use what English I and my contemporaries have made. I do not regret the passing of such a phrase as "That didn't

'alf jog my ol' flipper up " because it never was part of *my* language. What is my language? Middle-class English? No, English. And what about middle-class English?

Here we come to it. English prose and English speech are in a period of crisis which has made Joyce write the not very comprehensible *Work in Progress*, which has made the smart reviewers turn American reporting into a fashion. And like many past crises of style this one is at bottom a class crisis. Middle-class life is breaking up and changing, and middle-class English prose is changing with it. Prose style, like living in a certain class, is a habit. At first the habit is formed by certain facts or necessities; after a time it lives on its history and becomes a bad prose style referring not to living things and living ideas, but only to its habitual cadences, just as a class becomes inbred and obstructive. To understand what is happening to English prose and speech one must turn to other periods where a comparable class crisis arose. One cannot foresee the future of English prose, but one may in the past find hints of its possible direction.

At one time people ready with the revolutionary tip—and who knew that revolutionary periods are marked by a return to the natural and simple—suggested that soon all Englishmen would write the plain, honest simple English of William Cobbett. This may be so. But there seems to me to be an earlier and more startling model. I mean Daniel Defoe. A literature does not take one man as a model, but it may well look to the life and manner of one man when writers find themselves in a position similar to his. And the similarity of our situation with the one in which Defoe found himself is striking. First of all, the dynastic question was settled in his time and newspapers turned from politics to wider interests. (Compare Applebee's with the *Daily Herald*.) The age of chivalry had given way to republican ideas. (Romantic individualism gives place to socialism, trusts and planning.) The middle class were released and formed a great new reading public whose tastes were not aristocratic and elaborate, but who wished to read plain and simple narrative and not the elegant or fantastic romances of the earlier generation. In other words, the realism of Defoe, Fielding and Richardson, the first modern novelists in English, was the

product of a class revolution. And there is one other important item which makes the foundation of the B.B.C. jump with unusual pleasure into the mind : in Defoe's youth Charles II founded the Royal Society for the supervision of the new and growing quantity of scientific writings, and members of this society were requested to write their papers in language of utmost simplicity. Anyone who, in a B.B.C. studio, has been startled by the advice to regard the microphone not as a microphone but as a little child's ear, will appreciate that the Royal Society's request has a parallel.

Defoe was exactly the man to exploit this new condition of literature. He belonged to the newly emancipated class, was indeed a nonconformist—he had the nonconformist's instinctive skill in reconciling his conscience and his pocket—and was a man of bold temperament and original gifts. His books owe little or nothing to the past tradition of English letters ; we can surmise only that, like all his successors, he owed something to the picaresque novelists of Spain whose work had been translated. He may have read them in Spanish on his business journeys to that country. He set out to write what he called his “homely and plain ” prose to please the multitude, and no one had written in this manner before. His work was revolutionary ; so revolutionary—and here is the warning to those who see too much hope in the homely and plain Hemingways—that it was either not imitated or was found to be inimitable. The homeliness of Defoe was the result of a most carefully adjusted marriage of art and nature. It has been interesting to see the revival in Defoe which has taken place in the past twenty years or so—the rather studied homeliness and simplicity of Mr. David Garnett's work is one off-shoot of it—but Defoe's style is only one part of our parallel. His personality, his matter and his attitude to it are of equal interest.

Defoe is the man-in-the-street. He is the first man-in-the-street in English literature. He is the ordinary citizen, the man who has been turned out rough, unfinished, but sharp-eyed by the new era to get his living and make a place for himself. And he starts, like all revolutionaries, in the street. The polite writers of romances of the period he was supplanting, like the psychological novelists of today, were people of the drawing-room,

the boudoir and the lonely tower. They might refine upon their sensations, they might speak nobly of the soul, they might trace the nerve-strings of their amours like a lady drawing the thread of an embroidery. Good modern psychological novelists are better than Mrs. Aphra Behn, but their successors stand to them, for all the excellence of their sensibility, as Defoe stood to that passionate lady. The American pressmen have shown us as Defoe, the pressman, showed us, that the immediate, if not the later, future of the English novel is in the streets.

Then, his material. Defoe's characters are engaged in a life of endless adventure, but it is not adventure for adventure's sake, nor for the soul's sake, nor the sensibility's. Their adventure comes to them in the course of their work. Defoe is writing all the time about work and workers, and he is preoccupied with the one thing that preoccupies all such people; with money, profit, financial security. Robinson Crusoe does nothing but work on his island. He scarcely ever thinks. He feels only in the most limited way. We are interested in Crusoe because we want to know how he worked; we are not interested in adventure, but in the domestic, economic, practical circumstance of adventure, of how a man actually ran his Utopian island state. It is the most revolutionary theme. The Russian Government should have canonized this saint of the Five Year Plan.

But a passage from *The Journal of the Plague Year* will make clearer the relevance of all this to the present condition of English prose in the novel. I quote at random:

His discourse had shocked my resolution a little, and I stood wavering for a good while, but just at that interval I saw two links come over from the end of the Minories, and heard the bellman, and then appeared a dead cart, as they called it, coming over the streets; so I could not longer resist my desire of seeing it, and went in. There was nobody in the churchyard, or going into it, but the buriers and the fellow that drove the cart, or rather led the horse and cart; but when they came up to the pit they saw a man go to and again, muffled up in a brown cloak, and making motions with his hands under his cloak, as if he was in a great agony, and the buriers immediately gathered round him, supposing he was one of those poor delirious or desperate creatures that used to pretend, as I have said, to bury themselves. He said nothing as he walked about, but two or three times groaned very deeply and loud, and sighed as he would break his heart.

Free, indeed, from any trace of euphemism, scientific in its

precision of observation, rhythmical, simple and clear, this passage is a superb example of that excellent thing—the new standardized and colourless English of his time. There is not a picturesque word in it and, although Defoe was a tiny child at the time of the Plague of London and was therefore very consciously using all his art to pose, in the person of a London tradesman, as an eye-witness, no one could accuse that passage of a single literary affectation. He sought to tell the story—and here succeeded—as a tradesman would tell it, going to the length of introducing corrections and repetitions—"that drove the cart, or rather led the horse and the cart"—and one can be certain after reading this passage that the standardized dull, flat English of the half-educated, wireless trained, one-class society which is replacing our old middle class, has a power of survival and a literary future which the speech of Mr. Bates's country people has not. Defoe has shown us that standardized English has vitality when we come close enough to it; and coming close to it means letting the living voice, ordinary as it may be, sound in the words, like the voice of a singer in a chant.

And here we come to the final point of our parallel. Defoe wrote, with inimitable art, the narrative speech of the ordinary man. A new class, a new voice, even a new accent. And he wrote as if he were delivering evidence to the Royal Society. We are in a very similar situation. There will be a great increase in the broadcasting of plays, stories, and general narrative on the wireless. One can foresee the wireless serialization of novels from night to night. The spoken word may even eclipse the written word; but the spoken word on the wireless must first be written, and it must be written with that indispensable inflection of the voice in ordinary speech. Very little has been done about this so far, and for two reasons: the first, whose importance cannot be exaggerated, is that the B.B.C. does not yet give story writers liberty to write about what they like, how they like, and cannot therefore easily find good matter which will not shock the genteel susceptibilities of listeners—a great deal of Defoe and most of the Bible would, apparently, shock the present-day listener—and the B.B.C. naturally has to deprive the many who are intelligent, in order to keep quiet the many more who are not. The second reason—and an admirable

excuse it makes for not doing anything about the first—is that few if any writers exist who can write in the simple, direct, speakable narrative of Defoe. Born in the middle-class literary tradition, whose style now refers to other words and not to things and ideas, they are incapable of coming close to the life and manners of ordinary men—that is to say, themselves. The late King, an engine driver, some unemployed man achieved it, but hardly any writer, however meritorious otherwise, can do so yet. It will happen, of course, sooner or later. Some inspired pressman, some born man-in-the-street will do it. For the great instrument of our present class revolution and its English prose style revolution, is the wireless.

This does not mean that I am one of those who think that literature depends for its merits, its interest or vitality on its suitability to revolutionary ends or to broadcasting. We may take our warning from Defoe; he founded no school, he has no tradition. Lamb called his writing “kitchen literature”, which was excessive, but it is true that educated people are bored by work of very limited sensibility. Defoe is often a very monotonous writer because of this limitation. One tires of few men so quickly as men-in-the-street, and the English novel quickly left Defoe for more literary writers like Fielding, Richardson and Sterne. But one can see at a glance how far they had gone from Mrs. Aphra Behn. Their sensibility was not to words but to the sensations of life. It will be the same, I think, if there springs up a school of pressmen or wireless novelists: the wireless has the effect of detecting literary falsity at once, it shows up immediately the word which does not refer to real things, sensations and ideas, but merely to other words. Its criticism of our present best-selling, culture-while-you-wait imitator of George Moore would be devastating. We may submit our work to the criticism in this respect with profit; thereby we shall recover economy in the number of words used, objectivity, visual vividness, and a simple ease of narrative and statement. We shall have been bathed in reality, spiritual and physical; but when we go on writing, it will not be for a child’s ear but for an adult’s mind.

LIFE IN A WINDMILL

BY HAMISH MACLAREN

MY windmill stands on a high summit of turf amongst woodland in a secluded part of the Chiltern Hills. How old it is I have no real idea. People think nothing of coming inside the gate especially to ask me, as if I was likely to be flattered by this tedious question. I have given answers ranging from a vague : "Oh, seventeenth century, I believe," to a definite : "It was built in 1883."

I have never been bitten by the antiquity bug. I came here because I wanted somewhere convenient to live, and couldn't find a cottage cheap enough.

It was autumn when I settled in, seven summers ago. The garden of the Raven Inn was full of big purple daisies crowding up to the white palings and the darkling woodland dells were full of the robin's song. It was a good time for this part of the world. The steep fields were golden with harvest and the brooks were running fresh again with watercresses.

The mill had been cleaned up, made shipshape, new windows put in, and there were beds, bookshelves, more or less all the usual furnishings of an ordinary simple human dwelling. The bottom room had been fitted out as combined kitchen living-room, with a two-burner oil-stove and a big iron stove. The second room contained, besides the mill-stones, my desk and typewriter (where I now sit tapping, for the moment steadfastly resisting the lure of massed white mayblossom's scent that keeps drifting in) and the top had some camp beds and was otherwise to be used as a sort of sun-parlour.

It gets the sun all the clock round, as well as any wind that may be going. Up there on a breezy day you have the feel of being in an aeroplane or sailing-ship's cabin, something between the two. It was the sort of room that would make an early-riser out of the most confirmed slug-a-bed, I found.

I was sitting in the garden of the Raven one of those first days, feeling pleased with my morning's work, drinking my bitter cheerily.

Presently I went into the tap for a refill. A swarthy gypsy man, with very dark glowing eyes and a coloured scarf about his neck, was sitting there drinking, with a younger man. We exchanged a few words, then they went out to the garden.

I was just following with my drink when Bert, the landlord, said to me :

" Know who that is ? "

I replied :

" No. How should I ? "

He referred to the dark one who carried a big canvas pack. I had taken him vaguely, in the dim little room, for a pedlar, one of that rare, dwindling independent type, last of the genuine old English wayfarers, who are very occasionally to be met with still about the roads.

" That's Mr. Coppard," Bert said.

It was A. E. Coppard. By a coincidence, I had just had some correspondence with him, through the weekly newspaper that I was then working for.

I went out and did some introductory business, and he told me he was on his way over from a certain Oxfordshire hamlet to the Golden Cockerel Press establishment at Waltham St. Lawrence in Berkshire. This was the press that had published his first volumes of stories, a private press, the only publisher in England that could be found to print a book containing some of the finest short stories ever written in the English language.

Coppard had a hut in the woods not a hundred miles from the mill, so that it looked as if we should be seeing some more of each other. As a matter of fact, he came over one evening about a week later.

It was then that I showed him the unfinished typescript of my book, *Private Opinions of a British Bluejacket*. I had doubted if it was worth the effort of finishing and trying to get published, not because I didn't consider it good by any means (no more false modesty for me, I've suffered too much from the effects of that already !) but because of the " difficult " unconventional language. But Coppard sat there slapping his leg and shouting

with laughter. "Caw, o'man, it's rich! Get it done and published as soon as you can!" Alas for my hopes. I was certainly pleased with the book's reception. But I have been in this writing racket long enough now to know the value of reputation.

It is very useful for about one month. After that there is only one question that matters. How much are you making? I soon found that I was a disastrous failure at the authorship business.

But I had one comfort in my windmill. My rent was only £4 a year.

In those first days, before I had my fence up, people used to consider the mill and its environment public property. They still do, the more thick-skulled of them. In a silly, fumbling, blindly self-satisfied way they walk right in at the gate and round to the garden-plot, and even when they see my beanstalks and rows of bushy sticks for the peas they don't seem to get an inkling of the truth into their heads. Last Sunday a bovine motoring party turned up and behaved like that. When they saw me they turned and stared, began to simper and then look a little awkward.

"Not trespassing, I hope?" one of the women blandly asked. "It's such a lovely view, isn't it?"

I was bored black with hearing that. I rapped:

"This is private ground."

They stared fatuously. "Oh, is it? We thought, a wind-mill——"

"Surely to God anyone with half an eye could see it is," I fairly barked, with an imperative gesture of dismissal.

They shuffled out, looking so shame-faced that I almost felt sorry for them. But not really. Such people are a menace.

Perhaps I should have a notice prominently at the gate:

"PRIVATE. BEWARE OF THE DOG."

Not that there is a dog, only a cat. There was also a goat, but this infernal animal was kept by my neighbour at the cottage. It was supposed to be tied up, but it kept getting off, and all my early efforts at gardening were rendered null and void by it.

I tried to train honeysuckle to grow up the sail-supports, but of course that was cropped down at once. The animal would eat

anything, even small firewood, for which purpose, as I wrote in *The Spectator* at the time, it actually forced an entrance into the mill, butting open the bottom half-door (the door being made to open in halves, like a stable's) when I was sitting inside.

"Has it ever been previously recorded," I also plaintively enquired, "that goats can climb trees? I testify to having seen this one halfway up a hawthorn, cropping down the young shoots."

Another occasional pest was the quite genuinely decent sort of person who would stroll up, as I was busy on some outside job, with scythe or turfing iron, and innocently ask some would-be intelligent question, such as :

"I say, do the sails go round?"

Mighty intelligent, I must say! The sails, as they call them, are mere stark wooden beams, without a shred of canvas left on them, nothing but a few crossed laths of lattice-work on the top left-hand one.

Then there was the lady who got out of her car on the road, and sweeping across the grass like a full-rigged ship running free, brought up all standing within a few feet of me and began to gush at once :

"How charming it is! How truthfully romantic! And tell me, do you make all your own bread?"

When I was more or less settled in (the bigger pieces of furniture, incidentally, had to be got into the upper rooms by being hauled up with ropes through the windows) some friends came down to stay for the week-end. Nights had turned frosty and we built up great roaring fires of beech-logs in the iron stove. Hatches to the upper rooms were left open and thus, the heat rising, the building was quickly warmed throughout, and everyone said how wonderful and snug it was. The visitors went away envying me.

And on the following Monday or Tuesday, when I was alone again, came the first big autumn gale.

It came on in a hurry at evening. I was some way from the mill, looking for hazel-nuts, when it first began to blow up. I had heard the trees swaying and sighing in that sinister way they do before a storm. I made my way quickly on to the road and even as I hurried along it, remembering windows left open,

the coloured leaves were being stripped off the beechwoods. They were soon going away in streams and the roving, somnambulistic rooks, caught unawares in the sudden blast, were swept over me and blown a mile away before they checked and went plunging down for safe moorings.

When I came to the mill the worst was happening. I was just in time to see one of the new windows blown out with a bang, frame and all went sailing out over the hedge. I rushed up the ladders and somehow managed to get the other one shut.

Soon the place was in an uproar. The gale was pouring round it in a howling tide. The whole structure rocked and shivered, and the great sweep-beams began to groan and swing with appalling menace. I knew they couldn't go round, but I felt that the weight of them, swinging like that, would soon be wrenching the mill's top off. I looked out of the window to see, in the gathering dark, my little wooden out-house being bowled over and sent bouncing off down the hill.

I rushed about securing what I could. The top of a haystack that was up here on the hill for horse-fodder was whipped off in one slice, and the rest of it quickly went away in straws. The larches in the plantation were bending like saplings, and the noise was such that I could not have heard myself shout.

It was something like a hundred-mile-an-hour gale, as I heard afterwards, one of the fiercest ever recorded. Several ships were wrecked round the coast.

I lit a lamp in the middle room, and remained there for some time, like a captain who refuses to abandon ship. But the shaking and booming, and complete desolation of the place, submerged in the ghostly-grey cloud-wrack roaring round it, soon began to get on my nerves. I had little doubt but that it would shake to pieces before long, beams would come crashing on my head. And why wait for that? I asked myself.

I decided to sheer off until the gale had abated, and did so, coming out of the door in a rush of wind and out clear from under the sweeps, swinging wildly in the black invisibility above. I allowed myself to be blown away down to the Raven.

It seemed mighty snug down there in its hollow under the roaring leafy limes. I stepped into the warmly lamplit tap, where the landlord's daughter sat by the fire, sewing.

"My God," I said, speaking my glum thoughts aloud, "What wouldn't I give for an ordinary decent little house now, instead of that hollow horror up on the hill!"

The landlord's daughter was sympathetic.

"Yes, it's a terrible wild night," she agreed. "It must be awful up there at your place. Why, you're soaked through," she added.

Rain-squalls had come on when I was halfway down the hill.

"We'll soon dry here." I had a tot of rum and sat there steaming, sniffing the succulent smell of some roast coming in through from the kitchen.

"The mill won't blow down, I hope? You'd better not go back tonight," said the landlord's daughter. She said they were just going to have some supper and invited me to join them. I accepted with alacrity.

"No, it was sheer madness ever to have gone to live there at all," I said. "The place is just untenable on a night like this. Shouldn't be surprised if it's in complete ruins by the morning, the way things are going on."

It was certainly the wildest night that I can remember, on land. Nevertheless, I borrowed a waterproof and went back. I had to battle up every inch of the way. Water was now pouring along the roadside ditches and showers of wet leaves slapped in my face as the wind tore them off trees and hedges. When I came to the windmill in the darkness I was really quite surprised to make out that it was still there, a cone of deeper blackness anchored in the black flood of the gale. I went in under the groaning beams with a rush, slammed the door shut and climbing up to the top room, lit a lamp there.

By comparison with the torrent outside I seemed to have come suddenly into a still pool. All at once I noticed a little owl sitting hunched on the edge of the table, looking perfectly satisfied. There was an opening down from the chamber above, the space right under the roof where the great wheel and machinery connecting sweeps with turning shaft is situated, and it must have come in that way. I did not disturb it.

Thus we sat up there quietly, enclosed as in a resounding lamplit shell somehow moored up in the dark tide of wind.

And I soon began to feel that those old builders had known what they were about when they constructed this place. It was made fast, not going to fly loose at all. I turned in and presently slept the sleep of the just, and when I woke up the grey light of dawn was at the windows. The owl had gone, but the wind was still pouring close roundabout as if it would go on for ever.

But from April to October, given ordinarily equable weather, this is a charmed spot. And all the more so for being comparatively so near London. There is a certain point on the road from where, arriving on the motor cycle, I see the mill about two miles off, up there on the open sheep-cropped turf over the woods, against the sky-blue, and it is like an illustration for some old nursery-rhyme, ridiculously unreal. But I have not been about the place long before it seems that this is the true reality, and the racket and rush of the city only a confused dream. The contrast is sudden and direct.

In the fine summer weather it is like living always in the open, there is so much light. It is literally on top of the visible world, overlooking everything else, a hollow white wooden cone-capped cylinder set securely in its circular patch of shaven green, outside which the weeds and wild flowers grow tall, and all is perfectly silent at the moment but for the little monotonous song of a whitethroat.

EBB AND FLOW

BY STEPHEN GWYNN

A Monthly Commentary

NOTHING seems to me more interesting than the position of Mr. Baldwin. In the House of Commons with him before the War, I knew his appearance and also the sound of his voice, but no more. When he became Prime Minister, I said this to a friend who had also been in the House during those years. He said: "I did not know either, and I belonged to his party." In other words, Mr. Baldwin was very slow in asserting himself, but when he did, the assertion was powerful. When outcry against him was loudest, those who knew recognized that if he chooses to stay where he is, no one can dislodge him: though beyond all doubt confidence in him had been shaken. The result at Derby, when Labour gained 3,000 votes, and the National Government lost 10,000, represents possibly the phase at its worst. But rumour went that he was "losing grip"—that is, really losing the will to power, which he has had perhaps as strongly as Sir Robert Walpole, whom he likes to quote as his exemplar. His speech in the City disposed of that view; and his own account of his brief withdrawal from actual presence in the House of Commons recalls to me very vividly a personal encounter. It was at a small private dinner to men interested in politics but drawn from all parties. Mr. MacDonald, then Labour Prime Minister, was there and far more than common friendliness was shown him by the Leader of the Opposition. It was obviously the desire of this typically English politician that the first Labour Premier should have every chance to make good. But one piece of advice remains clear in my mind. "Don't let them worry you and put on you. Go down to Chequers, get a novel and an armchair, stick your feet on the mantelpiece and tell them all to go to the devil." It

**Mr. Baldwin's
Position**

seems to me that Mr. Baldwin has been practising what he preached and has insisted on taking time to ruminate. It is a particularly English characteristic Walpolian trait to dislike swift decisions—such as came natural to the great Welshman. Mr. Churchill's strong dash of American blood probably makes for the same result ; and, just for that quality of swift decisiveness, many would like to see either or both these figures closely associated with the Government. But Mr. Baldwin evidently prefers colleagues whose minds do not move faster than his own. Walpole would not use Carteret, the most brilliant political genius of that day. We may have to accept Mr. Baldwin with his limitations, and for my part I find myself agreeing with the opinion of an English member who has voted habitually against him during a quarter of a century, that Mr. Baldwin was the best Prime Minister he had known. He has generosity (far more than Walpole had), integrity, and sagacity ; and he has the strength to refuse to be hurried. But this strength is only of value if one can feel that decisive action will come ; and nobody feels sure of that.

Certainly the difficulty is appalling. Everyone in England wants to see Germany back in the League. On the other hand, many people in England think that Italy's continued membership of the League makes the whole institution meaningless, after her conquest and annexation of another League state. Yet suppose that England refuses to co-operate with a guilty member, but wishes to introduce Germany, the French will urge that Germany's occupation of the Rhineland was just as flagrant a breach of faith. Mr. Baldwin says that no improvement is possible in Europe unless an understanding can be brought about between France and Germany. But can that be achieved? Can one ask that it should be achieved, if Germany's intentions are represented by Herr Hitler's book which is distributed to every new married couple in Germany? A bowdlerised version has been carefully prepared for the English market—leaving out passages that plainly point to recovering Alsace Lorraine. Beyond a doubt, Germany will intend what *Mein Kampf* expresses, unless the certainty of resistance by superior force causes these projects

to be dropped. Mr. Baldwin emphasizes the need for strengthening England in a military sense. But is he going to be able to do it? Government can buy machines, but can it buy the men to work them? Increasing military man power is for England a question of cash, unless such a state of feeling exists as was roused last autumn by the attack on Abyssinia. Since then, the spectacle of defeat accepted by the League, with Great Britain giving the signal for acceptance, has produced a sullenness in the response to appeal for men; and one aspect of that sullenness is a lack of will to co-operate with France. When Mr. Duff Cooper made a speech in Paris saying that France and England had a common frontier to be defended, he was violently attacked. Yet it is perfectly true that in Europe, France and England have to defend a common frontier—the frontier of freedom. And unless they stand together to defend it, wherever it is assailed in Europe, freedom in Europe will be lost.

Mr. Lloyd George, in a powerful attack on the Government for its desertion of the Abyssinian cause, made a disastrous limitation: England, he said, would never fight to defend Austria. If he meant that England would never fight to prevent Austria from joining Germany should a majority of the Austrian people clearly so desire, he spoke what required to be said. But if he meant that England would do nothing to oppose such another foul blow as was struck against the Chancellor Dolfuss, he gives England a poor standing in Europe. When Italy is condemned for what Italy has done in Abyssinia, it should not be forgotten what Europe owes to Italy's intervention at that earlier crisis. Austria now has decided to declare that she "recognizes herself as German"—which indeed corresponds to the truth of facts. But she is recognized by Herr Hitler as independent. Her people are to be allowed to mould their independence as they desire. If they adopt the Nazi pattern, that will be their own choice—though what Austria as a whole desires nobody out of Austria, nobody in Austria, seems to know. But if Austria, with Germany as her friend, chooses to bring back the Habsburgs, her neighbours on the East will have to acquiesce. Certainly neither England nor France will

**Abyssinia—
A Doubt**

make war to prevent it. Thanks to Italy's prompt action in the past, a reasonable solution has been decently arrived at—and not thanks to Geneva.

On the other hand, by Italy's violation of all pledges, Abyssinia, men say, is wiped out and disappears. I wonder. A people that has maintained its separate existence and its Christian religion since long before English was a language does not easily vanish. Ireland was conquered seven centuries and a half ago, when its stage of development was very like that of Abyssinia in our days: but the conquest was not completed for five hundred years, and after two hundred years more, Ireland put herself on the map again, at least partially, as a Free State. Italy is likely to have her hands full in Abyssinia, even though probably, as in Ireland, the resistance may be sporadic. On the other hand, attempts to meet rebellion by extermination are not likely to be so whole-hearted as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries applauded in Ireland. Unless modern Italy can do what ancient Italy did and make Romans of people wholly alien in blood, I should give Abyssinia not more than fifty years to be Abyssinia again; and it is not impossible that Haile Selassie may live to see his country welcomed back into a League of Nations which can guarantee the safety of its members. If not, much else that civilization thinks worth preserving will have disappeared, as well as the Abyssinian State.

Civilization must fight for its own existence, and that existence is collective. It may have to define the boundaries of what it is prepared to defend, and may allot provinces for the task of mutual defence; but there must be willingness to defend an interest which is recognized as common—the common lawful peace. *Vital Peace* is the title of a notable book in which Mr. Wickham Steed expresses the conclusions forced upon him by lifelong study of European affairs—or rather of those states that were included in the Kellogg Pact. Peace, as he makes plain, cannot be a fugitive and cloistered virtue; if none are ready to face the dust and sweat but those who have the will to war, then war assuredly must dominate and possibly destroy the world. For unless

**Civilization
Must Fight**

human nature alters out of knowledge, even the unready will resist aggression, and the struggle against prepared violence, whether successful or not, will be desperate, recoiling from none of the means that modern knowledge has placed in man's control. The pith of Mr. Steed's book lies in two main conclusions. First, he draws a sharp distinction between peace and "non-war." "Non-war" is such a state as exists in Europe today, when no guns are actually going off, no bombs raining from the air. But if aggression took place tomorrow in Europe, as it took place yesterday in Abyssinia, nobody is certain what would happen. "Vital peace" is organized; it is the state of a body corporate where reactions are certain. We are so used to it in civil life that we forget how few generations separate us from the time when the killing of a man was a thing to be dealt with by his kin, his clan, or his feudal lord. Today the measure of England's civilization is the completeness of society's resistance to lawless violence. An illustration is painfully present to me. It was recently recalled in another connection that when Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson was shot on the doorstep of his house in London, passers-by raised the hue and cry and the men who shot him were run down. Nobody stopped to count the risk, much less to inquire into the motives of the crime. In Dublin at the same period many such deeds went unpunished, partly from fear of an organization behind the criminal, but largely because political murder was distinguished from ordinary crime. There was no "vital peace." Indeed up to the present hour many in Ireland would be unwilling to bring a political assassin into the grip of the law, because political crime is imperfectly condemned.

There is no state in Europe or in the world which reacts to aggressive war as English society reacts to any case of murder.

Italy's action was condemned by fifty-two

The
"Neutrals" nations, and the vast majority marked their disapproval by imposing "sanctions." Some,

however, declared, or were allowed to declare, that they would remain neutral. They might condemn on principle, but in practice it was, they held, no business of theirs to interfere. That is the attitude of many individuals in Ireland to a case of

political crime. While that attitude is recognized as possible as between state and state, there can be no "vital peace"—no organized protection of the individuals by the whole society. And, as is pointed out by Mr. Wickham Steed's second main thesis, if the League of Nations means anything, if the Kellogg Pact means anything, there can be no more neutrals. War of aggression is forbidden by both as a crime against society; under both, there is means to have a pronouncement whether aggression has taken place. That being so, no nation can say: "This is a crime, but we shall stand impartial between the combatants. We shall have the right to do good offices, impartially, to either of them, according as opportunity offers, and our interest dictates." This makes nonsense at once of both League and Covenant.

Yet Switzerland, in many ways the most self-respecting of all states, and the most internationally minded, claims to maintain its traditional attitude of neutrality, whenever, wherever, and however war occurs. That claim illustrates the difficulty of organizing a "vital peace." But until Switzerland and all other European countries feel that, for instance, an attack by Germany on Czechoslovakia must be resisted as if it was an attack on themselves, peace in Europe can neither be organized nor vital.

Discussions at Montreux on the future rights in the Dardanelles throw a singular light on the situation. The Turks, applying in civilized fashion for removal of the bar imposed upon them, claimed to fortify the Dardanelles; and the claim is at once conceded in principle. But angry discussion arises as to the right of other Powers to send warships through. Manifestly, in case of war, if Turkey is not neutral, the right will be denied to the side which Turkey opposes; and we may presume that the fortification this time will be formidably effective. But whereas Russia and Rumania desire that France and Rumania's other allies should be able in case of necessity to send assistance at once, Great Britain's spokesmen objected on the ground that difficulties might be created for Turkey. The objection appears to be that action might be taken under the Covenant before the League Council had decided that a case of aggression had occurred. If this plea came from Turkey,

it would have a different aspect. As it was, the Powers concerned inclined to hold that Great Britain sought to lessen the usefulness of a pact formed within the Covenant, by which the Western Powers, that is chiefly France, could bring help to the East—that is, the Little Entente—and that Great Britain's desire was to propitiate Germany and Italy—the only states which give evidence of the will to war.

In the case supposed, after the League Council has spoken, Turkey, as a member of the League, will really have no right to be neutral. The crucial question is whether a state, not directly attacked but holding a key position in the conflict, has the right to act in advance of the League's decision in support of its own view of right. In modern conditions aggression is likely to be swift, violent, and unmistakable: steps to meet it cannot brook delay. If Mussolini had waited for the League Council before he sent his divisions to the Brenner, the Nazi *coup* in Austria would probably have been a *fait accompli* in a week. On the other hand, a classic example of prolonging an attitude of "neutrality" until it became impossible without disaster is so recent that it still sticks in all our digestions.

It is probably not necessary for the British people to make up their minds what they would do if Germany attempted a *coup de main* in Danzig. No Power can afford to turn into an enemy so valuable a buffer state as Poland is for Germany. If the Germans and Poles can agree to something that will satisfy Germany, so much the better. But if Hitler has no results to show in Danzig, he may seek them elsewhere. Is the integrity of Czechoslovakia to be regarded as a thing to be maintained because the violation of it would break the common peace? Or is that an interest which England must leave to the protection of other people? And if so, has the pact between the Soviets and France no value for the frontiers of freedom? There seems a tendency in England to disapprove and even to thwart that Pact because it is unpopular in Germany. Yet without it, what even moderate guarantee is there for the independence of Masaryk's people?

Lord Hugh Cecil's acceptance of the Provostship of Eton is one of those facts which would bewilder a foreign observer.

**The Provost
of Eton**

One of the most admired figures in Parliament gives up his seat to become head of a school—yet not even to be a teacher : indeed, the foreign enquirer would be at a loss to find what precisely the Provost has to do at Eton, beyond reading the lessons in chapel. For that matter, does any man not an Etonian really understand much about Eton ? We all know that education there costs more, and consequently that the disproportion between scholastic knowledge acquired and money expended is often even greater than in other expensive English schools—because nowhere else is there so little compulsion to learn. We all know that there is an Eton stamp, but it is far less clearly defined than that of Winchester—again for the reason that there is so much individual freedom. In working on the papers of a brilliant Etonian (Sir Cecil Spring-Rice) it seemed to me that the life I was following was rather that of an undergraduate than of a schoolboy. Clearly in his case, a great part of education, (probably the greatest as in all Universities), was given by the young to the young. But also, in that lavishly endowed institution, there was, it seemed to me, even more than at Oxford, for such lads as desired it, access to minds of first rate culture, with leisure enough for their influence to radiate. Presumably, the Provost will be included among these sources of intellectual stimulus ; if so, the young whose parents pay largely to send them to Eton, and those others whose brains have earned them entrance there on the footing of King's Scholars, will have a notable privilege. Lord Hugh's approach to any subject has always been entirely his own. He seldom differed from his party, but the reasons which he gave for agreeing with it were seldom those which other men would have thought of. His mind was one that never would " think in track " ; but it could make the track of its own thought clear as daylight, expressing the most uncommon reasoning in the simplest and most familiar words. His eloquence shunned all inflated periods ; it seldom departed from the key of serious talk ; it abounded in delightful quips whose wit was never verbal but lay in some odd unexpected turn of thought ; and though he could be passionate, passion

never muddled the limpid flow of his speech. At times he could make himself the generous defender of a principle that he did not share : notably, when supporting the war with all his heart, he pleaded the cause of the conscientious objector—I think that in twelve years I heard no speech more truly eloquent delivered at Westminster. I should like to hear that clear, rather thin, but admirably flexible voice reading the lessons in Eton Chapel.

There was, it appears, some difficulty in finding a publisher who should help to provide the one suitable monument for

Sir William Watson, by bringing out the definitive edition of his favourite poems, selected and revised by him during the last months of his life. Thanks are due to Messrs. Harrap for this volume—two hundred and seventy-five pages of it. Not all will last, of course, though the level of workmanship over more than forty years is singularly equal. The collection opens with nearly a hundred sonnets, presumably because in this form his mastery was held to be most clear. Here are lines, all the more notable because written in 1894 :

“ I beheld alone
The Europe of the present, as she stands,
Powerless from terror of her own vast power,
'Neath novel stars, beside a brink unknown ;
And round her the sad Kings, with sleepless hands,
Piling the fagots, hour by doomful hour.”

Or here again, from “ Estrangement ” (perhaps the best of them all) is a fine sextet.

“ Thus may a captive, in some fortress grim,
From casual speech betwixt his warders, learn
That June on her triumphal progress goes
Through arched and bannered woodlands ; while for him
She is a legend emptied of concern,
And idle is the rumour of the rose.”

Yet in all his sonnets there is a certain inflation of the note alien to that austere form ; I prefer this poet when he can give himself to the full rush of words and images, as in the “ Hymn

to the Sea," whose classic associations fit with his tendency to stately words of Latin origin. One is often arrested by occasional felicities in this most sententious of poets : for instance, the praise of England, written for the Coronation Day of Edward VII :

" Time and the ocean and some fostering star
In high cabal have made us what we are."

But for his very best one would always turn to his poetic characterization of the poets—above all to his stanzas for the centenary of Shelley's death. Yet I had rather quote here (if only to recall his command of blank verse) the "Apologia," in which claiming—though only "as the veriest hind May yet be sprung of Kings"—a true descent from the great masters of English poetry, he defends his own work :

" Though I be to these but as a knoll
About the feet of the high mountains, scarce
Remarked at all save when a valley cloud
Holds the high mountains hidden, and the knoll
Against the cloud shows briefly eminent ;
Yet ev'n as they, I too, with constant heart,
And with no light or careless ministry,
Have served what seemed the Voice ; and unprofane,
Have dedicated to melodious ends
All of myself that least ignoble was."

The man was something too insistent on the greatness of the art which he followed—and what is far less pardonable, too complaining of its meagre rewards. Yet he was a fine and sedulous craftsman and passionate with pride of his country :

" O England shouldst thou one day fall
Shatter'd in ruins by some Titan foe,
Justice were thenceforth weaker throughout all
The earth, and Truth less passionately free,
And God the poorer for thine overthrow."

Fifty years ago he wrote that, and he died in the same honourable faith.

THE FORTNIGHTLY LIBRARY

THE RUSSIAN BALLET

By SACHEVERELL SITWELL

BALLET RUSSE, by Prince Peter Lieven.
Allen & Unwin. 15s.

APOLOGY FOR DANCING, by Rayner Heppenstall. *Faber.* 12s. 6d.

BALLETOMANE'S SCRAP-BOOK, by Arnold Haskell. *A. and C. Black.* 7s. 6d.

Two of the biggest theatres in London have during the past month been playing to capacity in Russian Ballet. This is, in itself, a phenomenon in the public taste ; but, as well, there is a torrent of literature upon the subject. The start of this came with the *Life of Nijinsky* by his wife. This has been followed by a whole bookshelf written by Mr. Arnold Haskell and culminating in his *Life of Diaghilev*. That was a fair and generous tribute to one of the most difficult subjects of biography. The first of the books to be noticed in this article is, in some sense, a supplement to that.

The author, Prince Peter Lieven, a member of a famous Russian family, has the memories of the authentic pre-war balletomane as foundation to his project. He has, as well, the advantage of intimate friendship with Nicholas Benois ; and his book is based in large measure upon the conversations and personal views of this *doyen* of the Russian dance. The most important chapters in Prince Lieven's book are those in which the rightful importance of Benois is stressed and he is restored to his authority in Diaghilev's councils. Diaghilev, it must be remembered, was a person who

derived his strength from others. At different stages in his life Benois, the Spanish painter Sert, Jean Cocteau, and, latterly the young Russian poet Boris Kochno, were the persons upon whose judgment he implicitly relied. But most decisive of all was the influence of Benois, who had been a friend of Diaghilev from his student days. The setting and conception of *Petrouchka* is the monument to their collaboration in taste. But it is apparent in this book that *Scheherazade*, the masterpiece of Leon Bakst, is no less due in the first place to Benois. Another scheme upon which he was engaged for many years was concerned with a ballet to the dance music of J. S. Bach. This was a favourite project with Benois ; and when Diaghilev died, sooner than allow it to lapse altogether, Benois produced it for Mme. Ida Rubinstein, and some readers may remember seeing it a few years ago in London. His setting for *La Valse* of Ravel, done at the same time, was another masterpiece of its kind.

But the restoration of Benois to his proper fame is only a small part of this excellent book. It contains perhaps the best explanation and description of Nijinsky yet given. This half idiotic or innocent droll, who was yet one of the supreme geniuses of the theatre, is drawn for us in convincing colours. It is also revealed that his family were circus acrobats, a historical fact which has been glossed over in the official life of him.

It relates him more than ever, therefore, to the nomad troupe, or tribe, to which he seemed to belong. They gave their performances in Siberian towns and in the distant interior of Russia. His non-European origin accounts for a lot that was strange and unaccountable in his genius. Prince Lieven has written a no less admirable chapter about Diaghilev. Perhaps the only fault at this stage of the book is a tendency to belittle Bakst on behalf of Benois. This is the natural result of the author's friendship; but it is time, indeed, that a consecutive and grammatical life of Bakst was written. Those published have been celebrated for the most appalling English that can ever have been penned. Prince Lieven, who is ably translated into English by L. Zarine, is perhaps the person to fill this deficiency, for it can be said that every fresh revival by Colonel de Basil of one of Diaghilev's early creations serves to emphasize the importance and originality of Bakst. The author is more especially concerned with the early history of the Russian Ballet, with its creations, that is to say, up till the outbreak of war in 1914, but he ends on a note of praise for Colonel de Basil and for the young dancers who are delighting the audiences at Covent Garden as these words are written.

The second of our three books, the *Balletomane's Scrap-Book*, is a delightful compilation due to the admiration of Mr. Arnold Haskell for everything that has to do with the art of dancing. It is a collection of snapshots of dancers taken both on the stage and from behind the wings. The ordinary photograph, or snapshot, has improved out of recognition in the last decade, in proof of which it is only necessary to look at the very inadequate photographs that are all that is left to us of the art of Nijinsky or Karsavina. Very different is the situation with regard to Toumanova or Baronova, who are to be studied at

close quarters in every phase of their art through the pages of this charming book. And Mr. Haskell is too loyal to leave the great Diaghilev out of the picture. He gives, in particular, a photograph of the death-mask taken of his features, in which the resemblance is most striking to Peter the Great, from whom Diaghilev used to boast that he was descended. This same resemblance, it may be added, was very noticeable in a bronze bust of Peter the Great, by Rastrelli, exhibited in the Russian Exhibition in London last summer. This death mask is the only sad note in the book, which, otherwise is a tribute to youth in the shape of this youthful generation of dancers whom Diaghilev did not live to see. For their astonishing technical achievement, the wonderful spins, if nothing else, of Toumanova, or Baronova, or Riabouchinska, is a definite advance upon the littleness and fatigue of some of Diaghilev's later or cosmopolitan phase of production. But a point upon which Diaghilev insisted, and which may tend to be neglected in the present more assured circumstances of the ballet, is the education of the dancers in taste. Technical skill and physical beauty are not all that a dancer should possess. They must also be trained in appreciation of every form of art; and, without a Diaghilev, it may be wondered whether their education is proceeding at the same pace as their physical exercises.

In the last few years the production of new ballets has seldom, if ever, been entrusted to really competent or original painters. Neither has a first-rate musician been given his chance. These concomitants are an essential to the art, or else the ballet will be stagnant and will decay. It is, now, this side of it more than any other which requires the attention of the directors. The sudden and unexpected enlarging of the audience to whom ballet appeals, and the consequent lack of discrimination in their

weight of numbers, has allowed this aspect to lapse altogether out of the scheme of things. It is not, perhaps, until this larger audience has become familiar with the most famous of the Diaghilev creations that the demand will assert itself, but, certainly, at this moment, the ballet is in an academic or passive condition, content with the old productions and with no new ambitions.

A book of recent issue, *Apology for Dancing*, by Rayner Heppenstall, is an example of the intense feeling now prevailing in certain circles. The sprinkling of Russian names upon his pages is as frequent as the peppering of Marx and Engels in a left-wing pamphlet. This is an interesting and an irritating book to read. It contains many passages of extremely sensible writing and some pages which annoy almost beyond endurance. It is, in fact, a provoking and rather stimulating book. The author writes in a tone of fervent partisanship, and descends, at the end, into parochial politics. Massine is discussed as though he were as important a figure as the Primate or the Prime Minister; and this is all to the good, for the author is almost certainly right. The future of the ballet is approached with bated breath, and Mr. Heppenstall does really communicate his excitement to his readers so that we are left in a state of keen apprehension as to future developments and probabilities. The English choreographer, Mr. Anthony Tudor, receives a well-merited eulogy, though some of his colleagues who may have incurred the author's displeasure get less than they deserve of praise. The truth is that the art is now so firmly established in England that there is every prospect of excellent work being done in the future. The performances at the national Theatre, Sadler's Wells, have a freshness and vitality that the superior skill of Colonel de Basil's company cannot aspire to. The home of this art, which

wandered from Italy to Russia and then lived in exile for many years, is now definitely in England.

This is where a book such as this can fulfil the most useful of purposes by stimulating discussion. The subject must be kept in a state of acute controversy, comparable to the insistent appeals by which the public hospitals maintain themselves, or else this newly-founded enthusiasm may lapse and fail. It will be through no fault of Mr. Heppenstall if this were to happen. The spate of books upon Russian Ballet proves the reality and authenticity of the public. This has been due in considerable degree to the persistent efforts of Mr. Arnold Haskell, who is doing his best to raise up a generation of balletomanes. But the need is for a Diaghilev, a genius of taste and discrimination, who will lead his age in the creation of new values and discoveries.

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LOW'S POLITICAL PARADE. *The Cresset Press.* 6s.

THE peculiar strength of Low lies in his mingling of passion and vision. Other cartoonists—Raemakers notably among them—have had passion. Others have had vision, the power to see impalpable facts and forces as shapes and lines on a flat surface; but in the most perceptive series of historical cartoons known to me, Max's drawings of England, France and Germany before, during and after the War, there is no passion. Max is high above the battle, recording, not commenting. Nearly every cartoon in Low's new book is a passionate plea. The passion is now pity, now contempt, now derision; but it is always hot with feeling for what he sees as the simple soul, misled, bewildered, exploited by war-lords, munition-makers and big business. Low is seldom funny. Except in the cartoon of Mr. Roosevelt and M. Litvinov in the "Russian Ballet" (the subject of which is not very near his heart), he rouses laughter only in his little digressions from politics—Lord Snowden in his bath-chair, or Mr. Ramsay MacBoniface's public house. Even Colonel Blimp, the fat, walrus-faced fool with his baths and his games, his "Gad, Sir," and his *clichés*, becomes, after half-a-dozen of those little drawings on the left-hand pages, exasperating, as he is meant to be.

But Low, though seldom funny, is nearly always witty.

His is the wit of an artist, which finds representation in form as a wit in language finds phrases. A simple instance is that in which Herr Hitler blows up a vast balloon made in his own image, in the carriage of which crouches a perplexed little Germany, and the inscription is "All blown up and nowhere to go." Another simple instance is the endless lorry full of shells compared with the little push-tricycle of Peace. That Low can use words wittily is plain from his essay on "The World and Colonel Blimp"; but his artistic wit is so self-sufficient that his cartoons owe little to the captions and the words. Even the snatch of dialogue between the ex-Kaiser and Herr Hitler is not necessary to explain the drawing of the perplexed Dictator and the trowsled pantaloons seeing over again his old vision of himself in shining armour. Even the famous "You know you can trust me" under the drawing of Mr. Baldwin, dated December 20, 1935, is not necessary to Low's bitter meaning. Nothing, indeed, is wittier in Low's work than his drawings of men. They are all phrases, hitting off his conception of Herr Hitler, Signor Mussolini, Lord Beaverbrook, and the other giants. We are left wondering how Low contrives to put all that absurdity into the back of Signor Mussolini dancing before a squad of armed babies, and all the cruel stupidity into the back of the fattest of the three munition-makers who sit watching the "South American Hell."

Low is the most powerful propagandist now at work. He would reform the world in a week if only things were as simple as he sees them; if peace and prosperity and universal charity could be attained by rough and ready methods; if all the world's misery were due to rulers, armament-makers and financiers; if Blimpiness were confined to Colonel Blimp.

HAROLD CHILD.

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THE COCKPIT OF EUROPE

By E. H. CARR

CENTRAL EUROPE AND THE WESTERN WORLD, by Gerhard Schacher: with a Preface by H. Wickham Steed. *Allen & Unwin*. 10s.

CENTRAL Europe has succeeded since the War to the unenviable role played in pre-war European politics by the Balkans. It has become a hot-bed of the petty national animosities of small states, and the cockpit of the more dangerous rivalries of the Great Powers. Dr. Schacher's book first saw the light in Prague and, like everything else published in Central Europe, is concerned to prove a thesis. But its propaganda character is sufficiently obvious not to deceive the least wary reader. Dr. Schacher has a great deal that is interesting and valuable to say on a problem of which little is known in Western Europe; and with the reservation that it contains far too much special pleading for the Little Entente in general, and for Czechoslovakia in particular, his book can be recommended to the student of the contemporary European chess-board.

Of the five states, excluding Italy, which inherited the territory of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy—Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Rumania—not one had succeeded, in the first ten years after the war, in establishing itself in a fully independent position. The three last-named, forming the Little Entente, enjoyed French patronage, and were well supplied with French money and French arms and

munitions. Austria became the pensioner of the Principal Allied Powers who, having forbidden her by the peace treaties to link herself with Germany, recognized a moral obligation to assist her to maintain a fictitious independence. Hungary, like Austria, was also helped with a League loan (now in default), and received surreptitious favours from Italy, who by this means secured a foothold in Central Europe to balance France's position as patron of the Little Entente. The Danubian basin was thus split into two camps of victors and vanquished, though the special favours conferred on Austria allowed her to occupy an intermediate position, and to stand rather aloof from the bitter mutual animosity which raged between Hungary and the Little Entente.

Such was the position prior to 1931. Money was easy, and prices stable. The Central European States enjoyed the temporary stimulus of foreign loans and high protective tariffs. Germany was still too weak to play an active role, and Italy and Hungary were no match for France and the Little Entente. But in 1931 the world crisis revealed the artificial basis on which the economic life of Central Europe rested; and during the period of paralysis which followed, Germany reappeared on the scene of her ancient triumphs and ambitions like a ghost of the past. The Danubian problem took on a new shape. In that shape it is still unsolved today.

There is no space here to do more

than recapitulate the principal attempts which have been made to solve it. First came the proposal for an Austro-German Customs Union, which Czechoslovakia (and perhaps other states in Central Europe) would have been forced by economic pressure to join. This foundered on the united opposition of France, the Little Entente and Italy. Then came the Tardieu Plan of 1932, which was that the five Danubian states should live by taking in one another's washing and granting one another preferences. This was impracticable in itself, and was opposed by Germany and Italy. Then, later in the same year, the Stresa Conference improved on the Tardieu plan by a project under which the Great Powers would undertake to purchase Danubian wheat at enhanced prices. This met with scant sympathy from Great Britain, who was far less interested in the prosperity of Central Europe than of Canada and the Argentine, or from Germany and Italy, who saw no point in giving something for nothing. Lastly, in 1934, came the Italian plan of bolstering up Austria and Hungary by preferential agreements and endeavouring, by the same inducement, to draw Czechoslovakia into the Italian sphere of influence. This plan has been rendered successful up to a point by the virtual withdrawal of France from Central Europe. But it can only be pursued further at the price of the complete disruption of the Little Entente.

Dr. Schacher reviews in turn the merits and demerits of all these solutions. He rejects the German solution with a wealth of emphasis, but an absence of argument—other than the argument, which is correct, but not perhaps a conclusive objection, that it would lead to the economic predominance of Germany throughout Central Europe. He rejects, more carefully and in more measured terms, the Italian solution.

Italy's economic interests in Central Europe are relatively small. Her financial and economic strength do not entitle her to play a preponderant role there; and Dr. Schacher might have added that her past policy has made her an object of general suspicion and dislike in all the Danubian countries, except perhaps Hungary. In the long run, Dr. Schacher comes back to the Tardieu-Stresa plan. The Danubian countries must unite among themselves, and in order to induce them to do so, they must be directly or indirectly subsidized by Western Europe.

It is not possible within the limits of a review to refute this thesis in detail, though the material for the refutation can be found in Dr. Schacher's book. It is a moot point whether the five Danubian countries could in 1919 have been fused into a single economic entity. But even the disappearance of the political jealousies between them—an enormous and unrealizable assumption—would not make them one today. They are no longer mutually complementary economic units. Under the policy of self-sufficiency which all alike have followed, Czechoslovakia and Austria no longer need the agricultural exports of Hungary, Yugoslavia, and Rumania; and these three states no longer want the manufactures of Austria and Czechoslovakia. As the statistics show, not one of these countries is primarily or vitally interested in trade with its Danubian neighbours. Italy is—or was until recently—Yugoslavia's best customer. The best customer of all the other Danubian countries is Germany. Fortunately or unfortunately, these facts are more eloquent than Dr. Schacher's well-marshalled arguments. Economically as well as politically, there is no Danubian solution of the Danubian problem; nor in the long run can the Western Powers compete with Germany in the Danube basin.

THE CELTIC STRUGGLE

By SEAN O'FAOLAIN

A HISTORY OF IRELAND, by Edmund Curtis. *Methuen*. 12s. 6d.

ALL I need say of Professor Edmund Curtis' book is that it is not just a History of Ireland: it is the History of Ireland. On page after page one gets the feeling that one is being lifted high above the confusion of things by a scholar with an amazing power of detachment, clarity, and realism; and this with one of the most complicated stories in the development of western Europe. At first one reads for information sake; before a hundred pages are out one is gripped as by a tremendous historical novel. And when a dozen tests—the double-ditches of Irish history—are cleared with a thoroughbred ease; and a fine sense of proportion has reduced a welter of rivalries (which is all that most historians make out of this material) to their real significance, or insignificance; and, at last, a pattern emerges out of what has hitherto been inextricable confusion, one realises that this is the only credible account of what really happened.

The secret of this unique success is that Edmund Curtis writes not merely as an Irishman, but also as a humanist; that he is that rare phenomenon a Gaelic-speaking, Protestant, cultured, Trinity College, pragmatic nationalist; so that the expectations he evokes, the emotions he arouses, the hopes and despairs to which we submit ourselves in his hands, arise solely from the sight of culture and order (of what origin does not matter, whether Irish, Norman, or English, though he would obviously

prefer it to have been Norman-Irish) striving in vain to be born.

He does not emphasize; he elicits, and the facts are their own criticism. We see the old Gaelic order meet the first shock of Europeanism with the arrival of the culture and order of the Roman Church; we see it absorb and choke that seed, and already we get a hint of the inflexibility of the Gael, his power to create locally but never nationally, his "particularism," his rigid traditionalism, and we are prepared, even while still hoping for the contrary, to see the next seed, brought this time on the Norman wind, likewise absorbed, and choked. Here, between the Norman invasion and the Statute of Kilkenny (1366), whose restrictions on Irish ways is the confession of the failure of the Normans to absorb rather than be absorbed, most Irish historians have entrenched themselves on the Gaelic line, and while Curtis broods over the birth-pangs of a civilization, their records, like what they record, are as local as an ant-heap.

From that 1366 to the end of the Wars of the Roses, the Gaels did, thanks to England's internal troubles, re-possess and hold for one hundred and fifty years two-thirds of Ireland, but since in all that peace they did not even produce a good lyric, their inaction, their failure to establish at least a central rival in the west to the diminished Pale in the east, is their final condemnation. So, when re-conquest begins it faces a far more complex problem and enemy—the first

Anglo-Irish, already Home Rulers—while the Reformation defined the enemy as not merely English but Protestant. Here begins the sorry stupidity (begins?) of English rule. Confiscation, suppression, plantation, attempted anglicisation, and reformation hammer an inchoate nation into a consolidated enemy. One magnificent Gaelic chieftain, the unforgettable Hugh O'Neill, did arise then, but when he left Ireland in 1603 the Gaelic order was virtually dead. The corpse was galvanized into a few last movements by Cromwell and William; it almost came to life again; but when Sarsfield and the Wild Geese fled to foreign fields the game was thrown into the lap of the masses. They accepted the challenge, and in their rags and tatters they clung, like drowning men about a rock, to the mighty figure of O'Connell. Still ragged they followed Parnell. Still poor and unregarded they emerged under Collins—the modern Irish democracy. I do think Professor Curtis should, by then, have abandoned all hope of that old European order and faced the fact that the whole fight, from 1690 onward, was between entirely different forces. The key to Irish history up to then is undoubtedly the potentiality of reform by infusion. From Limerick onward the key is reform from within.

The second Anglo-Irish nation that emerged under the Georges—the Irish power of absorption is an amazing fact—was in its hey-day a Protestant junta who lived in genuine splendour and some real grace in Dublin city. But while we appreciate all the picturesqueness of that Dublin, we regret, with Curtis, that with greater wisdom on the part of the English people, whether under Henry II or George III, that European order, Irishised certainly, more democratic, could not have established itself in Ireland and allowed the blended strength of two races to give, in peace, whatever they had to give to the world.

THE AMERICAN LANGUAGE: An Inquiry into the Development of English in the United States, by H. L. Mencken. *Kegan Paul.* 21s.

EDWARD EVERETT, the once-famous orator and public character of Massachusetts, declared that in America the common language was better spoken and written than it was in England. Half a century later John Fiske, the historian of New England, was shocked to find that the English talked like Germans: "so much guttural is very unpleasant, especially as half the time I can't understand them"! When Sir William Craigie undertook the making of the first Dictionary of American English on historical principles the *Chicago Tribune* joyously announced his appointment under this headline, "MIDWAY SIGNS LIMEY PROF. TO DOPE YANK TALK." With due modesty I translate this delightful sentence as, the University of Chicago (situated on and about the Midway) calls an English professor to assemble and expound the speech of America. Everett made his assertion in 1820. The *Chicago* headline belongs to 1924. Mr. Mencken's book is a survey of the growth of American English mainly between these two dates.

The American Language is an extraordinary achievement. In 1919 Mr. Mencken published under the same title a book which was reviewed all over the world and attacked in England with no little severity. The volume now before us, of 800 pp., is not a new edition but an entirely new work. The author has completely rewritten it. Ample and far-ranging, masterly in statement, witty, and from cover to cover fascinating to read, it is a triumph of industry and discernment.

What is an Americanism? It was defined in 1889 as "a word or phrase, old or new, employed by general or respectable usage in America in a way not sanctioned by the best standards of the English language"—that is, the

English academic standards of the early nineteenth century. Judged by this test we are all using Americanised English (*using* here is an Americanism). From the beginning of the Republic complaints arose in England, chiefly with regard to the adoption of new and convenient words—*e.g.* lengthy, influential, statement, endorsement, affiliate, jeopardize, standpoint, underhanded. Imagine our plight to-day if we had to do without such "barbarous" inventions as these. Mr. Mencken considers at length the earlier coinages and the English objections. He describes the astonishing flood of new words and phrases which accompanied the opening of the manifold West, the continuous impact upon the common speech of an ever-changing immigrant stream; he examines the main features of present-day American, provides a long list of parallels, and concludes with a short estimate of the future of English as a world language. Every page bristles with points for debate; I have space only for comment upon a few of the more conspicuous.

Mr. Belloc has said that every vowel sound has in America taken on some different value. That is so, and yet, curiously, it is in his treatment of the vowels that Mr. Mencken seems to me least satisfactory. He discusses, for example, only two sounds of *A*, the broad and the flat. But the *a* of Northern England (in *Adam*, *grass*, *lad*), heard all over North America, is not flat but short. The characteristic American sound is the long flat *a* (*caan't*, *plaant*), which Mr. Mencken, who of necessity avoids all professional phonetics, indicates as the *a* in *care*. This is virtually unknown in England, although, oddly enough, one public man, Lord Curzon, almost had it in his *last* and *past*. Mr. Mencken says that the speech of the Southern States is near to that of Southern England. Certainly it is not in the matter of the short *a*. Over wide

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Money, by Hartley Withers (1s. 6d. net), a brief but masterly survey, is one of the recent additions to the new Nelson Classics, which include also *Garibaldi and the Thousand* by G. M. Trevelyan, *The English Novel* by J. B. Priestley, *The Atom* by E. N. da C. Andrade, and 300 other books. Complete list post free from Nelsons, 35 Paternoster Row, E.C.4.

regions of the South, as over the North and West, the vowel in *hat*, *man*, is the sound belonging to the North of England. Mr. Mencken, again, says that the differences in the *E* between England and America are not important. I should affirm that they are most noticeable and have become fundamental. The English short *e* (with the short *i*) has gone from a large number of words in America, giving place to the indeterminate vowel heard everywhere, as in *ullavator*, *tullagram*. And no less marked to the English ear is the disappearance of the English *T*, an important question which Mr. Mencken does not discuss. To us the American everywhere appears to be saying *bedder*, *budder*, *inneresting*, *Beddy*; except when, most quaintly, he turns the *t* into *r* and so makes *commirree*, *lirrerary*. I hazard the prediction that the English sharp *t* will by 1950 have dropped almost out of American speech.

As we are well aware when considering our fiercely contested "standard" English, the long *O* and long *A* are the crucial vowels, and I am amazed that Mr. Mencken should not have devoted a chapter to them. In America the *a* in *face*, *mail*, has been as pure a long vowel as English can show. It is now being broken down. The long *o* is still general in the West and Middle West, a full and satisfying sound. We may note, however, especially in the Atlantic States, a rapid process of phonetic decay, which has brought what Mr. Francis Hackett rightly calls a rich cockney note into "educated" speech. The film actresses provide a terrifying mass of evidence on both vowels, and to hear the diphthongal "Ow now!" in a smart New York voice is to have a convincing reminder of the spreading plague. It would, I believe, be strictly accurate to say that, judged by their *a*'s and *o*'s alone, the young people now coming out of the schools and colleges have a much less pure vowel

utterance than their parents, whether of British or European stock.

The aspirate, of course, is all-important, although Mr. Mencken accords it no more than a few lines. He says truly that there is nothing in America "so lunatic as the cockney mishandling of the *h*." The Americans, he tells us, early gave up the aspirated *wh*, while in England its absence is "often denounced as an American barbarism." I take this to be one of the most astonishing statements in the book. Everywhere in North America, except in some of the Southern States, the Englishman hears the initial *wh* sounded among the common folk with Scotch and Irish emphasis. A fully aspirated English is, beyond all dispute, the capital linguistic achievement of North America. Whatever may be happening to the *a* and *o*, to the *r* and *t*, here is the incontrovertible fact: that between the Atlantic and the Pacific, between the Arctic Circle and the Gulf of Mexico, the *h* is immovable. In this fact alone, we may be sure, lies the guarantee that the English which the world is to speak must be essentially American.

S. K. RATCLIFFE.

JAPAN'S FOREIGN RELATIONS,
by R. H. Akagi. *Hokuseido Press*
(Edw. G. Allen). 17s. 6d.

**TOGO AND THE RISE OF
JAPANESE SEA POWER**, by E. A.
Falk. *Longmans*. 16s.

THESE two books, both quite out of the common, make a valuable complement to each other, the one tracing the development of Japanese diplomacy from its mainly defensive attitude in the 19th century to its modern aggressiveness, while the story of Togo supplies the link and explanation between the two periods.

The keynote of all Japanese action, indeed from as early as the arrival of the Portuguese and Spaniards in the

16th century, where Dr. Akagi begins, is supplied by his saying that "from the early years of the Meiji Restoration the attainment of equality and security became the two cardinal principles of Japanese diplomacy." For 250 years the Tokugawa Shoguns had sought security by rigidly shutting the doors against all foreigners. That policy enabled the Western Powers to impose upon Japan's ignorance humiliating treaty restrictions, and—what we are seeing the evil fruits of today—it left her far behind in the 19th-century scramble for colonies. With wholly admirable patience and resolution Japan qualified herself to get rid of the obnoxious treaties; she appeared to have achieved equality in the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and security by the defeat of Russia.

In respect of equality at least she has had some rude shocks—at Versailles where her proposal for the recognition

of racial equality was rejected by President Wilson; at the Washington Conference; and worst of all in the insulting American immigration law, of which Dr. Akagi says that "each year that passes without amendment or abrogation (of the law) only strengthens and sharpens our sense of injury." Not unnaturally these wounds to Japan's *amour propre* have aggravated her alarm for her security as once again Russia seems to be reaching out to the Far East. How continually the menace of Russia has loomed over Japanese thought, even since the earliest days of the 19th century, is perhaps the most striking feature of Dr. Akagi's book. There is, of course, little doubt that, but for the Russo-Japanese War, Manchuria and Korea would have been Soviet provinces today. Japan's triumph in 1904-5, at a cost of 120,000 lives and 2,000 million yen, inspired "the semi-sacred sentiment with which the Japan-

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AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF FUKUZAWA YUKICHI FOUNDER OF MODERN JAPAN

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ese nation have since regarded Manchuria," says Dr. Akagi. The phrase is worth remembering for the light it throws on later events, the seizure of Manchuria and the continued aggression towards China. In these later chapters the historian in Dr. Akagi gives place to the propagandist. He justly emphasizes the conciliatory policy of Baron Shidehara towards the Kuomintang, who in the first flush of their triumph in China were frankly impossible, and we may well believe that Mr. Hirota, the present premier, desires to follow the same path. But Dr. Akagi is conspicuously silent about the real masters of policy, the militarists, whose intolerable conduct will probably end in what they most wish to prevent by driving China into Russia's arms.

It is interesting to speculate on how Togo's influence would have been used today if he were still alive. With endless research and fine imagination Mr. Falk has given us a wonderful picture of the great Admiral, omitting none of the blemishes and thus really enhancing one's conception of him as a great gentleman and devoted patriot. It is difficult to believe that one so prudent and far-sighted, who reckoned the cost of every step and prepared for it with the minutest care, would have endorsed the reckless, endless adventures on which Japan appears to be launching out in Asia.

Togo was a samurai through and through. "Don't lose" was all his mother said in farewell when as a boy of 13 he went off to the defence of Kagoshima. He invariably fought his battles from the open bridge, disdaining shelter in the conning tower. As an old man he could not reject the honours showered upon him, but he did reject the money and lived and died comparatively poor. No hero has moved the Japanese people so deeply, and with justice. O. M. GREEN.

THE BOOK OF BARRA. Edited by John Lorne Campbell. *Routledge.* 15s. 6d.

THE HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND. by Hugh Quigley. *Batsford.* 7s. 6d.

THESE two are as different as two books could be, with Scotland as their subject. The first is concerned with facts, the second with views—in each sense of the word. Both are good books.

Mr. Campbell has done a great service to Scotland by collecting all the information available about that island of six miles in length and three in breadth which Dr. Johnson and Boswell neglected to visit—to the regret of Dr. Johnson. And he has got Mr. Compton Mackenzie to write part of his book and Carl Hj. Borgstrom another part, while he himself supplies us with a mass of well-ordered facts of economic, historic and topographical interest, as he is well qualified to do. The result is not only workmanlike and interesting but deeply moving.

Mr. Mackenzie writes with biting effect of the Catholic population of Barra and their stupid and disastrous persecution by the Presbyterians. But even his contribution pales by the side of the many pages of bare facts as well as virile exposition in which the editor lays before us all that is definitely known of a most fascinating and unfortunate island from 1549 to the present day. Of this part of the book the most valuable section for students of history is that devoted to twenty-six letters written by MacNeills of Barra from 1805-1825 to the parish priest of Barra, the Rev. Angus MacDonald, who later became head of the Scots College at Rome—letters now published for the first time. But the highest point of indignation in a splendidly indignant book is reached in the account of the clearances (1841-1851), partly reprinted from Donald Macleod's *Gloomy Memories* and in the findings of the Crofters Commission in 1883. Negroes

were not worse treated by the slave traders, yet the Barra affair had written support from Harriet Beecher Stowe! Families were torn not only from their homes, but separated, carried like beasts into the ships, and landed in Canada penniless and with hardly a word of English between them. There they had to beg and, all but some two or three per cent., to die of want in the Canadian winter. Their looks are described by an onlooker in Canada as being "of indescribable sorrow." In the later commission of crofters in the island it was established that they were robbed of their cows, forbidden even to gather their own excellent cockles, and subjected to every sort of oppression by the infamous landlord, Colonel Gordon. The young people on his estate were forbidden to build houses or to marry, and many for years "did not know what milk means." They were "just able to live" in an island where they could have had plenty. Even fishing was made almost impossible for them.

And this is the island which was "productive of good crops of corn with very rich grazing" at the end of the seventeenth century—the naturally happy and careless island, "which," says that connoisseur of islands, Mr. Mackenzie, "expresses as well as anything our faint human apperception of Paradise." He would rather see London a heap of ruins than Barra reduced as Rum has been reduced, and he hopes that Dr. Johnson was a prophet, concerning Barra as well as Iona, when he reflected that "Perhaps, in the revolutions of the world, Iona may be sometime again the instructress of the Western Regions." Who knows but that history will here once more repeat itself? It might do far worse. Meanwhile Barra has at least escaped from being a penal colony, as Colonel Campbell wished it to be in the nineteenth century.

Mr. Quigley's solution for the present

plight of the Highlands is *tourisme*, aided by the development of transport, water systems, good hotels, new roads, the expansion of home industries, and—especially—"the scientific exploitation of the forests of Scotland now being grown by the Forestry Commission." For the rest his book consists of uncommonly well-informed descriptions of the Highlands seen with an "unprejudiced" eye and a heart untroubled by tradition, and accompanied by admirable photographs on almost every page, taken by Mr. Robert M. Adam.

CATHERINE CARSWELL.

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WESTERN CIVILIZATION IN THE NEAR EAST, by Hans Kohn. *Routledge*. 15s.

THE awakening to life, after centuries of stagnation, of those countries which are loosely called the Levant, and which once were the hearth of the civilized world, is one of the romances of our time. Not through any re-emergence of older civilizations, but almost wholly as a result of contact with European (or American) methods of life, are the embers now glowing in a previously inert mass of Eastern countries. It is this induction into the orbit of the modes of the West that is the subject of Herr Kohn's painstaking study.

The author is well-equipped for his task. He has lived for a considerable time, both in Russian Central Asia and in Palestine, and has long studied conditions in the countries neighbouring those regions. It is his theme that the end of European domination in the East is at hand, an end fostered by the East's adoption of those very means upon which Europe previously relied for her superiority. Nor, if the physical aspect alone be considered, is there likely to be any serious quarrel with this point of view.

To all appearances, the lands of Africa and of Asia which are dealt with in this book are to assume, if not their importance during classical times, at any rate a much greater place in the eyes of the world than has for centuries been accorded them. Not only does the burgeoning of these lands to some extent inform the ambitions of the Great Powers, but their Westernization is also interesting for its own sake. This impetus towards Westernization has been provided, on the one hand, by the East's perception that by means of it alone could survival be ensured, and, on the other, by the realization that the East, of itself, had not sufficient civilization to stand the strain of modern conditions.

Such a statement, however, by no means implies that there will be in Africa and Asia mere replicas of European States, for in this process of transformation the creativeness of the East, long hidden, will without doubt come into play. Curiously enough, Herr Kohn scarcely mentions the bridge between East and West which the Jews in Palestine often claim to be building for the welfare of humanity—patently the omission is deliberate. I wonder whether he thought of applying to present-day Palestine a saying of the Prophet which he quotes in connection with the Lebanon: "If any man shall oppose one who is assigned to his protection, and lays too heavy burdens on him, I shall myself stand forth as that man's accuser at the Day of Judgment."

For the most part the author keeps to sober facts, accessible elsewhere, whether he is describing past ages in the Near East or the present day. His carefulness occasionally deserts him, however. What authority has he, for example, for stating, generally, that the nomadic tribes of the Middle East "gladly seize" the opportunity to settle and to become agriculturists? The contempt which the bedouin have for the fellaheen will not pass in a decade. Again, when describing world communications, he indulges in some statements which have been derived from not wholly responsible sources. He talks, for example, of a railway from Port Fuad, in Egypt, through the Sinai Peninsula to Aqaba, at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba (Red Sea); he writes that a London-Haifa-Baghdad railway is part of a British policy, but that the Iraq government does not favour the use of Haifa—a queer distortion, this; and his fancy further takes charge of his pen when he discourses on an intended railway from Aqaba to Kuwait (Persian Gulf).

Yet on the whole the work is done conscientiously and well. There are many trees in Herr Kohn's wood, but a

clear enough picture emerges of the way in which States from Turkey to Afghanistan are trying either to maintain or to win independence and to develop innate qualities. Mechanical devices are affecting profoundly all these lands. They are undergoing both a physical and a mental revolution, a revolution the pace and direction of which Herr Kohn does much to indicate.

KENNETH WILLIAMS.

MONT SAINT - MICHEL AND CHARTRES, by Henry Adams.
Constable. 12s. 6d.

MOST introductions used to be written by eminent persons to recommend the contents of a book. Recently, however, there has been a spate of publications in which the introduction is not only a laudatory notice but an explanation of how the book came to be issued, and no one will doubt that the issue of some books needs explanation. The present book first appeared over thirty years ago in America in a limited edition, and when it was suggested that a new issue should be made, the author took alarm. It was, he said, "unnecessary and uncalled for." But Mr. Ralph Adams Cram, who contributes the introduction, found the book more than a "revelation" of the life of the Middle Ages; when he read it for the first time "at once all the theology, philosophy, and mysticism, the politics, sociology, and economics, the romance, literature, and art of that greatest epoch of Christian civilization became fused in the alembic of an unique insight and precipitated by the dynamic force of a personal and distinguished style." Authors are not quite such timid people as they are usually made out to be; but even the most resolute of them could hardly have withstood so furious an assault. Mr. Adams was overborne, and Mr. Cram

had the opportunity to record his triumph in a lyrical introduction.

The book over which this battle was waged is much more than a guide to the two churches mentioned in the title. It is an essay on medieval architecture in France, and an attempt to portray the religious and political life of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Excellent advantage is taken of contemporary chronicles in dealing with the famous and infamous figures who crowd the crusading era, but the account of the struggle between Bernard of Clairvaux and Peter Abelard makes that renowned contest seem rather like a squabble between two schoolboys.

Mr. Adams gives an interesting picture of the construction of Chartres, the finest Gothic church in France; touches lightly on its history during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; and describes the cathedral as it is today, with particular attention to its stained glass and other unique features. Chartres can be forbidding at certain times of the day, and Mr. Adams emphasises that it should first be seen in the morning light, when the beauty of its perfectly proportioned towers can best be appreciated. Unfortunately, his judgment is not so sound in presenting his wide knowledge. If it were, surely he would not have used so overburdened a style or adopted the pose of being the simple, very simple man. "We know nothing (of technique) and should care if possible still less," "one who is principally conscious of ignorance," and similar remarks about himself become ridiculous when repeated in a book which is often highly technical. The book purports to be written for the tourist, but only the student will derive much advantage from it. Certainly the ordinary visitor will be bewildered if he depends solely upon Mr. Adams to introduce him to Mont Saint-Michel and Chartres.

G. A. CAMPBELL.

EYELESS IN GAZA, by Aldous Huxley.

Chatto & Windus. 10s. 6d.

BIRD ALONE, by Sean O'Faolain.

Cape. 7s. 6d.

THE publication of a new book by Mr. Aldous Huxley is not only an artistic event of considerable importance, but is also like a flag pinned on a war-map, that shows where English culture is advancing; for Mr. Huxley is, with Mr. Forster and Mr. Wells, one of the three most eminent novelist-intellectuals in England at the moment, and is recognized as such internationally.

The first thing that strikes one is that Mr. Huxley's special talents are as richly in evidence as ever. There are the exquisite descriptions of a landscape or an interior, there are the mercilessly observed characters, humorous and tragic, the inimitable effects of bathos in scenes that are revolting or horrible and ridiculous at the same time, qualities that made Mr. Huxley famous in his earliest books. He has created no more living character than Mary Amberley, the brilliant, sensual and beautiful woman whom he shows falling a prey to an unscrupulous and brutal lover when her charms are failing, and ending up poor, hideous, morally decayed, with a morphia phial beside her amid the filth of a tiny room in Paris. And he has created no more painfully absurd character than John Beavis, father of the hero Anthony, a professor who brings out always just the wrong colloquialism and just the wrong sentiment. There are also extremely funny scenes: Mr. Huxley has done few things as good in comedy as the episode where one sister bets another that she will steal something from every shop they come to on a morning's walk, or the return of Anthony Beavis to his preparatory school after his mother's death. But there are at the same time passages of philosophical meditation, a *genre* in which Mr. Huxley has displayed some skill in the past, which are almost intolerably boring. Moreover,

Anthony Beavis seems to come to depressingly second-rate conclusions about history and the universe, falling back on a sort of Yogi mysticism after a life which one might think would have produced some more positive reaction in him. Supremely occupied with the necessity of averting a new war, he decides that Fascism and Communism are all one (and the Devil), and that the only hope lies in complete non-resistance. He then describes a fatally unconvincing scene, a large public meeting where these methods have amazing success with the first heckler, while almost at the same time the Gestapo is carrying the young German exile, Ekki, off to horrible tortures in Germany after having tricked him into their clutches.

Luckily, these philosophical passages are broken and scattered through the book, though they all form part of Anthony Beavis's Diary, in 1934-5, at the end of the actual time-sequence. And that is perhaps the only real justification for the eccentric way in which the book is composed, leaping, to the reader's confusion, from period to period and then back again, so that an event in Anthony's boyhood is sandwiched between, say, a passage from the Diary and a love-scene with Mary Amberley. It has, nevertheless, the fascination of a jig-saw puzzle, where the main design of the picture soon emerges.

It is, one feels, a technique that could never be used in a book that worked up to any kind of strong ending. It could not, for instance, have been used in Mr. Sean O'Faolain's new novel, where the climax is the death of the heroine as she gives birth to her secret lover's child, on a stormy night in a remote cottage in the wilds of Ireland, haunted by horrible fear and remorse, a sense of sin that her Catholic upbringing has planted in her. *Bird Alone* is an interesting contrast, in more ways than one, to *Eyeless in Gaza*. Anthony Beavis is a lonely figure, as

Corney Crone is, and both are left with the feeling in the end that they have lived their lives wrong, struggling to keep a freedom that has turned out not to be a freedom at all, but a death-bringing isolation. But how utterly different the lives are that have reached this common conclusion: Anthony Beavis, a cultured and sensually indulgent cynic, moving always with ample private means in upper-class English society; Corney, a young provincial Irishman of poor family, sexually starved, the two most dominant things in whose intellectual landscape are the Catholic Church and the hunted Fenian rebels. And how utterly different the misty half-tones of Corney Crone's world from the precise definition of everything that surrounds Anthony Beavis. This atmosphere, however, and the lovable, humorous character of Corney's grandfather, fanatic Parnellite to the end, are the most attractive things in a sincere and moving work. JOHN LEHMANN.

INTERVAL ASHORE, by Horton Giddy.

Cape. 7s. 6d.

TUG-BOAT, by Roger Vercel

Chatto and Windus. 7s. 6d.

MIGUEL OF THE BRIGHT MOUNTAIN, by Raymond Otis.

Gollancz. 7s. 6d.

IN such a questionable shape does the contemporary novel frequently come to the reviewer that he is uncertain whether it be his duty to act as a critic of fiction or as a student of fact. An extensive acquaintance with the topography of Southern Russia, the history of the Intervention, the life and language of British naval officers and French salvage crews, and social conditions in Spanish America, would ensure that the three books under notice could be faithfully dealt with as documents. Mr. Horton Giddy, however, rescues us with an authoritative assurance, the very necessity of which is a comment on the present condition of fiction. "This is a novel," he confesses in a note to *Interval Ashore*.

It is at all events that rare thing, a good story. Whereas the publishers of *Miguel of the Bright Mountain* can relate at length, and without so much as a "Stop me if you've heard this one," that book's whole plot upon four sides of its yellow jacket, to reveal the swift changes of incident in *Interval Ashore* would be to rob the reader of much of his pleasure; though not of all, since many will enjoy for its own sake Mr. Giddy's crisp style. It may be said that the scene is laid in South Russia, during and after the evacuation of Odessa, that an English naval officer is captured by the advancing Reds and at length makes his way to freedom, by a route as thrilling as could be desired, in the company of a Russian girl who has been fighting with the White Army.

With Mr. Vercel we leave port again, and in dirty weather. Captain Renard's salvage tug is called out of Brest to the rescue of a Greek steamer that is drifting helplessly, with a broken rudder, in such a storm as Lear apostrophised. The villainy of the Greek captain is of a piece with the rage of the elements, and thereto the plot, such as it is, attaches itself. But the plot matters less than the hourly work on board the tug, and in spite of a suspicion of over-writing the struggle between man and sea is one to watch.

The Iberian peoples must have, as one says of certain trees, remarkable power of occupation. The Mexican villagers in *Miguel of the Bright Mountain* are as immutably Spanish as their Andalusian contemporaries. The microcosm of Hormiga, the hill-village to whose "bright mountain" the fancies of young Miguel persist in clinging is well presented by Mr. Otis, who understands the peculiar Spanish blend of unambitious impassivity and emotional excitability. This is in some ways a curiously naïve piece of writing, but the central idea is well sustained. FRANCIS WATSON.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Admiral Richmond's last appearance in these pages was in December, when he wrote, without much hope, of the then impending Naval Conference. Its unfortunate results are now emphasized by the insecurity in the Mediterranean and unwelcome signs in the Far East. Admiral Richmond has therefore sought, from his long sea experience and naval studies, to show the new problems thus raised for our naval strategists, which have important reactions on British policy.

Donald Cowie has recently returned to England after seven years in New Zealand, where he wrote editorials for a Christchurch paper. While there he was struck by the blind reliance on England for defence, and this subject is partly dealt with in a book which he is publishing.

George E. Taylor, after considerable travel and research in China, settled down at Nanking for three years as Professor of History at the Central Political Institute. Returning to England last spring he was immediately invited to speak on Chinese affairs at Chatham House. For the Institute of Pacific Relations he has also written a Memorandum on "Reconstruction in China." He is at present working on a book on recent Chinese economic history.

Jan Struther is known to all readers of *Punch* for the delicate verses, with decorations by E. H. Shepard, which are now shortly to be published under the title of *The New Struwwelpeter*. Her work, mainly essays, verse, and occasional short stories, frequently appears in the *Spectator* and the *London Mercury*.

Arthur Waugh's genial retrospect of London publishing is that of one who has lived a long life in the heart of the book world. Some of his reminiscences of the profession appeared in 1930 in *A Hundred Years of Publishing*, which is a record of the house of Chapman and Hall, over whose fortunes he long presided. Mr. Waugh is the father of Alec Waugh and Evelyn Waugh, the authors. His own books make a longish list, and he has edited Milton, Tennyson and Lamb.

Hamish Maclaren, as may be inferred from his sketch, was a naval man. He retired after the War with the rank of Lieutenant-Commander, and his book *Private Opinions of the British Bluejacket* owed its great popularity to his unusual success in penetrating the mind of the lower deck.

Michael de la Bedoyere is editor of the weekly Catholic journal, *Catholic Herald*, and hence in close touch with Rome. His present article, though it does not claim to be based on official knowledge, reflects the current view held generally in ecclesiastical circles in Rome.

Kenneth Henderson is a barrister who has made a special study of libel law. A paper which he read on the subject at the conference of the Empire Press Union in June led to much discussion in the press, but the fate of his draft Bill, as he rightly says, must remain uncertain in the overworked mill of Westminster.

Sir Henry Wheeler, after a life spent in the Indian Civil Service, retired in 1927, and has since been a member of the Council of India.